JOB *Market*

GMA 7 supports 3-day Inquirer Job Market Enhancement Expo, which starts today at Glorietta

WORLD / A28

UN Security Council demands that North Korea end its ballistic missile program

SPORTS / A30

Tough Pinoy boxer loses title challenge by 9th-round TKO

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS; FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, July 17, 2006 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 219 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Fireworks show keeps Mayon villagers awake

By Ephraim Aguilar and Gil Francis G. Arevalo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—FLAMING LAVA AND rocks cascaded down the slopes of Mount Mayon, raising risks of a major eruption and putting thousands of villagers on high alert for evacuation.

"If the activities continued in the next few days, we may upgrade the alert level to 4, which means a hazardous eruption.

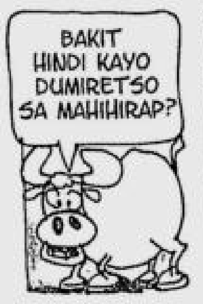
FIREWORKS/ A8

Vestments among Palace gifts, says CBCP official

By Christian Esguerra

BASED ON AN ACCOUNT of an official of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, it appeared that President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration pulled every trick recently

VESTMENTS/ A8


BAKIT HINDI KAYO DUMIRETSO SA MAHIHIRAP?

Chavez sees RP-US plot in Bolante case

Defensor: Palace clueless like anyone

By Philip C. Tubeza

FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL FRANCISCO Chavez yesterday said Malacañang schemed with the United States to keep Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante from testifying in investigations in Manila on allegations a P728-million fertilizer fund was used to buy President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory in the 2004 election.

Malacañang, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the US Embassy have clammed up on the controversy more than a week after Bolante, a former agriculture undersecretary, was reportedly detained in the US immigration facility at San Pedro, Los Angeles, after his visa was reportedly cancelled for still unexplained reasons.

Yesterday, the President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, again said there was "no news blackout" on the Bolante case.

Defensor said Malacañang, just like himself, was just "clueless" and if anybody really wanted to find out what was going on, he or she should go to the United States and ask authorities there.

Chavez, who exposed the fertilizer fund scam, said that Bolante's reported application for political asylum in the United States after his visa was scratched would effectively allow him to stay there for the next three to five years, untouched by Filipino investigators.

He explained that the whole process of applying for political asylum could take "a minimum of three years and could even last to five years if [Bolante] gets a good American lawyer."

Chavez also pointed out that the Senate, through Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., never requested

CHAVEZ/ A9

A PHOTOJOURNALIST takes a shot at Mayon Vocano during its "mild and quiet eruption" as seen from Legazpi City. Government volcanologists have raised alert level 3 after observing "lava trickles" (inset) down its slopes.

AP

OFWs' escape routes in Lebanon bombed

By Nikko Dizon

THOUSANDS OF FILIPINOS who may have to flee strife-torn Lebanon will most likely face a difficult and dangerous way out of the capital Beirut because many of their possible escape routes have been bombed and damaged by Israeli forces, an official said.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokersperson Gilberto Asuque said the DFA was preparing for "the worst-case scenario" as the war between Israel and Lebanon widened on Sunday.

The conflict has shattered the Middle East peace and pushed world crude oil prices to record levels.

"The only logical contingency plan is to look for a safe haven within Lebanon," Asuque said in a phone interview.

He said the Philippine Embassy had found a Catholic parish in northern Beirut, headed by a Filipino priest, that could serve as an evacuation center.

However, the parish could only accommodate 5,000 Filipinos. There are some 30,000 Filipino

OFWs' ESCAPE/ A4

PNP starts probing coup financiers

By Luige A. del Puerto and Leila B. Salaverria

ACTING ON PRESIDENT MACApagal-Arroyo's order, the police starting today are summoning for questioning shadowy supporters of alleged plots to overthrow her administration, supposedly including businessmen.

"We have many names ... We may start (inviting) two people and then the rest will follow," Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon said on the phone.

Calderon refused to divulge the identities of those who would be invited for questioning, saying the police were still assessing the information they had.

"In fairness to them, we still have to determine the extent of their participation," Calderon said on the phone. "They might have been in one party, for example, but were not really privy to conversations there."

They would be asked why their names cropped up as among those allegedly involved in the anti-Arroyo plot, Calderon said.

"Starting tomorrow (Monday), we will send invitations," the PNP chief said.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonza-

PNP STARTS/ A8

Talks with Reds show Magdalo split

By Nikko Dizon

THE MILITARY REBEL GROUP, Makabayang Kawal Pilipino (MKP), that negotiated with communist insurgents early this year was formed by repentant Army 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, emphasizing the divide within the Magdalo rebels that mounted the Oakwood mutiny in 2003, sources in the Armed Forces said.

"Lieutenant San Juan was among the founders of the MKP," one junior officer privy to the movements of restive junior officers told the INQUIRER in an interview yesterday. The officer, along with other military sources, requested anonymity, citing security concerns.

On Friday, San Juan announced that he was breaking his ties with the Magdalo and the MKP and swore allegiance to the Constitution and the Armed Forces.

He also apologized for his participation in the Oakwood mutiny and admitted that he had held talks with the Communist Party of the

TALKS/ A8

CBCP letter masterpiece of ecclesiastical hedging

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE JULY 10 PASTORAL LETTER of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has disappointed a sector of public opinion which had expected a sharp rebuke to President Macapagal-Arroyo as she faces a new round of impeachment proceedings when Congress resumes regular session on July 24.

Although the CBCP letter centered on the impeachment issue as its main theme, it left the public in the dark over whether the bishops were exercising their moral authority either to encourage or discourage the fresh impeachment bid in the House of Representatives to determine the "truth" of allegations in the complaint, particularly the charge that Ms Arroyo rigged the 2004 election results.

The letter is a masterpiece of ecclesiastical hedging and equivocation. The document is so ambiguously phrased that anyone

CBCP/ A12

Lesson from killer quake: Don't take life for granted

By Mel Lawrence de Guzman
PDI Research

SONIA Malasarte-Roco: Survivor recounts 36-hour ordeal beneath the rubble.

IT WAS THE EARTHQUAKE, EXACTly 16 years ago yesterday, that shook her life and made her grip on it tighter.

That afternoon of July 16, 1990, Sonia Malasarte-Roco, wife of the late Sen. Raul Roco, was attending a seminar on financial management sponsored by the US Agency for International Development at the six-story Hotel Nevada in Baguio City.

Nevada was one of the eight hotels leveled by the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit the country that day, killing around 1,200 people and destroying at least P10 billion worth of buildings, houses, roads, bridges and other infrastructure facilities.

LESSON/ A12

AT LEAST 40 people were believed to have died when an earthquake struck Hotel Nevada, together with other buildings in Baguio City on July 16, 1990.

PDI PHOTO

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. There will be frequent rains over Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: CYRILL BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/07/17/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Subic van driver testifies today

By Tarra V. Quismundo

AFTER MONTHS OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE, TIMoteo Soriano Jr., driver of the van where four American Marines allegedly raped a Filipino woman at the Subic Freeport last year, is set to testify today at the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Soriano, who is the prosecution's 21st witness, is presumably the key testifier to what really happened in the Starex van on the night of Nov. 1, 2005.

Lawyer Evalyn Ursua declined to divulge details on how the prosecution panel would approach Soriano's direct examination, careful not to preempt today's proceedings.

The court already sent subpoenas to Soriano at his residence in Caloocan City and at the transport service agency where he worked for in Makati City, to inform him of his required appearance today, Ursua said.

Soriano, who was inside the rented Starex van where complainant "Nicole" was allegedly raped by Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to the cheering of three comrades, became controversial when he recanted his earlier statement that he had witnessed a gang rape inside the vehicle on the night of the incident.

Soriano alleged that he executed his first affidavit under duress, threatened by Paquito Torres, chief of Subic's Intelligence and Investigation Office (IIO).

He claimed that Torres prepared a written statement, falsely saying that Soriano saw a gang rape committed in his van.

The driver further alleged that he was forced to sign the statement because Torres purportedly threatened to include him in the rape charge.

Despite his spotty statements, Ursua tapped Soriano to prove 22-year-old Nicole's allegations against Smith, Lance Cpls. Dominic Duplantis and Keith Silkwood and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier.

The lawyer said that although Soriano retracted his earlier statement, he never denied that Nicole was raped.

"He did not recant the whole affidavit," Ursua told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"There were two important points in his recantation: One, he did not say gang rape [in executing his affidavit]; and two, he did not say that [Nicole] was unloaded from the van like a pig [after the alleged act]," she said.

"In fact, in his second affidavit, he did not say that there was no rape. He stands by the details in his first statement … But we have to go by what the Supreme Court had said—that recantation is not looked upon with favor," she added.

Ursua did not specify who would handle Soriano's direct examination and if he would be asked to explain his two affidavits on the incident.

The prosecution examined earlier witnesses who had executed sworn statements before investigators.

Asked how important Soriano's testimony would be for the prosecution, Ursua said: "Every evidence is important."

Earlier, witness Joseph Khonghun named Soriano as among those who had seen Nicole being unloaded from the Starex van at Subic's Alava Pier, a short walk to the accused servicemen's ship, the USS Essex.

Khonghun, an Olongapo City businessman, narrated to the court excerpts of a chat he had with Soriano at the Subic IIO office on Nov. 2.

According to Khonghun, Soriano said that on the night of the incident, Smith and Nicole were seated in the van's third row, three other Americans were seated in the second row, and Carpentier was seated in the passenger seat beside the driver.

Soriano told the businessman that he had heard Carpentier tell Smith "Go Smith! Go!" as the others shouted several times "F**k! F**k!"

'Rape case has ruined my life and career'—Smith

A 21-YEAR-OLD US MARINE ACCUSED OF raping a Filipino woman at the Subic Bay Freeport last year said on Sunday that the case has ruined his life and career.

"I think it's horrible what I've been accused of," Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, of St. Louis, Missouri, said in response to questions submitted through his lawyer by The Associated Press.

"This place has taken a year off of my life that I can never get back and I just hope the lies will stop and the people will start to see the truth," Smith said in the answers faxed to the AP by his lawyer.

He refused to answer questions related to the case because court proceedings are still ongoing. The US Embassy, which has custody of the Marines, has restricted media contact with Smith and the other accused.

Smith, along with three other Marines accused in the case, refused to enter pleas to the rape charges, so the judge entered not guilty pleas on their behalf. If convicted, they face a maximum 40 years in jail.

"My career and my life in general has come to a screeching halt," he said.

Smith said his family and friends initially thought he was joking when he first told them he had been charged with rape.

"They are all praying for the day that I tell them I'm cleared of all of these allegations and that I will be coming home to see them," said Smith, the second of three sons of a nurse and a firefighter.

"We have always been a really close family and I can't wait to get back and see them once all this is cleared up."

Smith, during a chance interview in court had earlier said it would be too expensive for his parents to fly to the Philippines for the trial, and that they could not afford to leave their jobs. But he said he calls home a lot to talk to family and friends.

A 22-year-old woman has accused Smith of raping her in a moving van at the Subic Bay freeport, a former US Naval base, on Nov. 1 while Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier, Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood and Lance Cpl. Dominic Duplantis allegedly cheered him on.

She testified she resisted, but was drunk and too weak to stop the assault.

Defense lawyers said the woman and Smith had consensual sex.

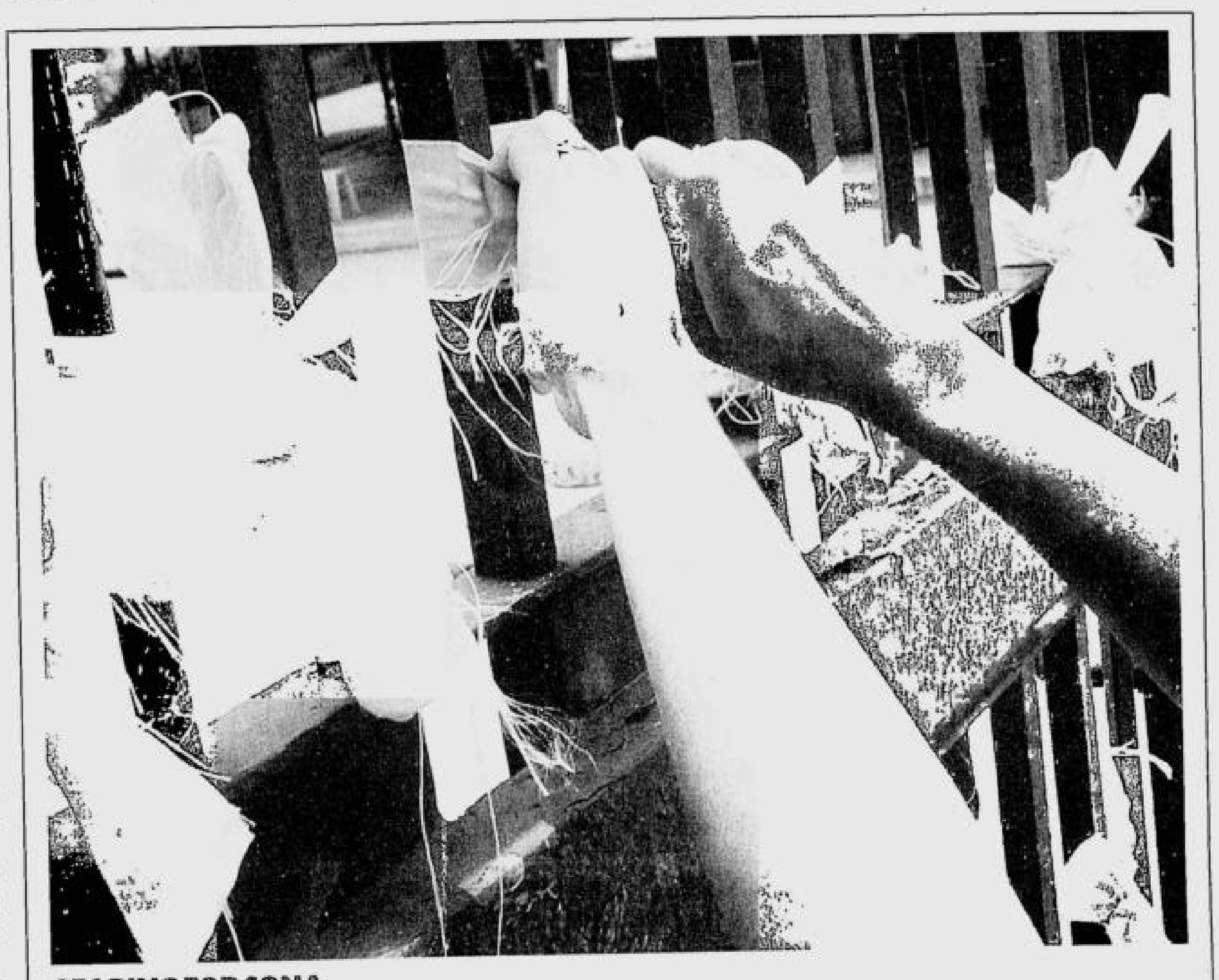
Smith said when he is not in court for the hearings, which are held four days a week, he listens to music and swaps stories with his co-accused.

He and Silkwood also attend services held by visiting pastors, and "that helps us with a positive outlook on all of this," he said

Smith said he joined the Marines in 2004, two days after his high school graduation, to get a jump start on life and to help pay for a college education.

He said he was stationed in Okinawa, Japan. The Marines had just finished counterterrorism maneuvers with Philippine troops when the alleged rape took place.

AP



GEARING FOR SONA
Militants from Anakpawis tie peach ribbons calling for the impeachment of President Macapagal-Arroyo at the gates of the Batasan where she will deliver her state of the nation address on July. 24
RAFFY LERMA

MITSUBISHI MG500
TCM 860-1
LGP
CATERPILLAR D6C
4X4
FORD 8210 FARM TRACTOR
KOMATSU PC200-3
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ISUZU 10W CARGO TRUCK
ISUZU 10W MIXER TRUCK
8-STUD
FUSO 6W ALUMINUM VAN
4X4
W/NOZZLE METER
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NDF seeks adoption of earlier agreement

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

AFTER REJECTING PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's demand for a permanent ceasefire between government forces and New People's Army rebels as a precondition to the resumption of formal peace talks, the National Democratic Front urged the government to study and finally adopt the proposed agreement that it submitted last year to finally end the 37-year-old communist insurgency.

"This proposal has never been withdrawn. So, it still stands," Luis Jalandoni, chair of the NDF peace negotiating panel, told the INQUIRER in response to an e-mail query.

Jalandoni predicted the war would stop and a just peace would ensue "within the very day" that the government and the NDF co-sign the proposed agreement.

He said he personally handed the draft of the NDF's "10-point Concise Agreement for an Immediate Just Peace" to lawyer Rene Sarmiento and other government officials in Oslo on Aug. 29, 2005.

Jalandoni, also a member of NDF national executive committee, said he also gave a copy of the proposed agreement to Norwegian government officials present.

Some of the highlights of the proposed agreement deal with the unity of the Filipino people against any foreign domination; empowerment of workers and peasants; economic sovereignty; repudiation of foreign debts; and promotion of a patriotic, scientific and pro-people culture autonomy of national minorities.

The rebels also called for an investigation of government officials who are liable for treason, corruption and human rights violations; the adoption of independent foreign policy with normal trade and diplomatic relations with all countries; and finally the cessation of armed hostilities.

Jalandoni maintained that the people's demands for land reform, education, health and other basic social services, and workers' right to just wages must be addressed in order to have a just peace.

"If there is no adequate response to the peasants' just demand for genuine land reform, there can be no peace. If the workers' demand for just wages and humane working conditions is not met there will be no peace," he stressed.

'Libingan ng mga Bayani' in Tacloban

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—THE YOUNGER BROTHER of former first lady Imelda Marcos will construct a "Libingan ng mga Bayani" in this city.

Tacloban City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez on Wednesday ordered the release of P5 million for the construction of the "Libingan ng mga Bayani," which will occupy three hectares of the 11.5-hectare Tacloban New Public Cemetery in Barangay Basper, located about 10 kilometers from the city proper.

For Romualdez, constructing a hero's burial ground was his way of recognizing the good deeds, if not "heroic acts" of the residents of this city.

Construction would immediately commence and the project is expected to be finished within the year, the mayor said.

Romualdez said he created a special committee, which he chairs, that would formulate the guidelines as to who would qualify to be buried at the "Libingan ng mga Bayani."

The special committee will include representatives from a non-government organization and from the Church, the mayor said.

This early, however, the city mayor said that among those who would qualify to be buried at the cemetery are those who occupy elective positions in the city government—mayors, vice mayors and members of the city council.

"They deserve to be given due honor and recognition as they have spent the best years of their lives (doing good deeds) especially for the city and even for the entire region," the city mayor told the INQUIRER, referring to those who would be interred on the city's own version of the "Libingan ng mga Bayani" in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City.

LGUs urged to set aside budget vs Reds

By Norman Bordadora

INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT Secretary Ronaldo Puno yesterday urged local officials to set aside a portion of their peace and order budget for the Arroyo administration's two-year final push against the New People's Army.

Puno told local officials that he would ask Malacañang to come up with counterpart funds from the national coffers to help local government units give "logistical and operational" support to the PNP in its "active support role" versus the armed leftist rebels.

"Our victory over insurgency is a continuing and sustained struggle. The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the PNP must go all out against the lawless violence that insurgency engenders. Our local government units and institutions down to the barangay level are part of the core of this effort," Puno said in a statement.

His pronouncement was in line with a Malacañang directive requiring local chief executives to incorporate a counterinsurgency component in their integrated public safety plans for provinces, cities and municipalities.

The call for local government funds in the anti-NPA campaign comes in the wake of the PNP's P300-million share in the P1-billion anti-insurgency budget set aside by the Arroyo administration for the all-out war against the leftist underground.

"All of us should be involved in defending and protecting the nation against this continuing threat, so that our countrymen in insurgency-affected barangays can rest better at night, be free from revolutionary taxation, and live in communities that are conducive to economic growth," the secretary said.

Puno, concurrent chair of the National Police Commission, told the INQUIRER on Saturday that part of the PNP's active support role against the NPA was the recruitment of "police auxiliaries" from among the ranks of barangay officials, particularly the *tanods* or community patrol persons.

"If they are going to defend the community, they will necessarily have to be armed," he said.

The secretary said the police auxiliaries among barangay *tanods* would be "force multipliers" of the PNP especially in far-flung barangays in the countryside. He said they would defend the community from revolutionary taxation and would prevent armed cadres from conducting organizing activities among civilians.

NPA rebels kill 3

CITY OF CALAPAN—A policeman and a government soldier were killed yesterday while two others were wounded in a fierce eight-hour gunfight with 50 suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the mountain sitio of Nangka in Barangay Balao, about 3 km from Abra de Ilog town proper in Occidental Mindoro.

An Army officer was also gunned down yesterday by communist rebels in Barangay Sukol, Calumpit, Bulacan, police said.

SPO1 Danilo Estuya of the Philippine National Police office in Occidental Mindoro identified those killed as PO1 Michael Tañedo and PO1 Nong Tambawang. One of the wounded was Eddiever Berayo.

The third victim, First Lt. Paul Fortuny, 34, was from Malate, Manila and assigned to the 56th Infantry Battalion, in Norzagaray town, some 100 km west of Calumpit.

Four assassins gunned down Fortuny yesterday at 9:25 a.m. while he was inspecting the flat tires of his car, which was parked in front of his girlfriend's house.

Fortuny died instantly. *Madonna T. Virola and Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk, with a report from Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Security enhanced at airport

THE MANILA INTERNATIONAL Airport Authority (Miaa) started implementing over the weekend the second phase of an enhanced security procedure at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1.

In a statement, the Miaa said these security procedures were being implemented at the Naia 1 departure level to speed-up boarding procedures and ensure a "less stressful stay at the airport" for departing passengers.

On Saturday, the Miaa relocated the x-ray machines from the satellite area to the pre-departure area adjacent to the immigration counters and conducted a test run.

Thus, passengers won't have to queue anymore at the satellite areas for the final check since they would undergo final security check right after the processing of their immigration requirements, the Miaa said. *Nikko Dizon*

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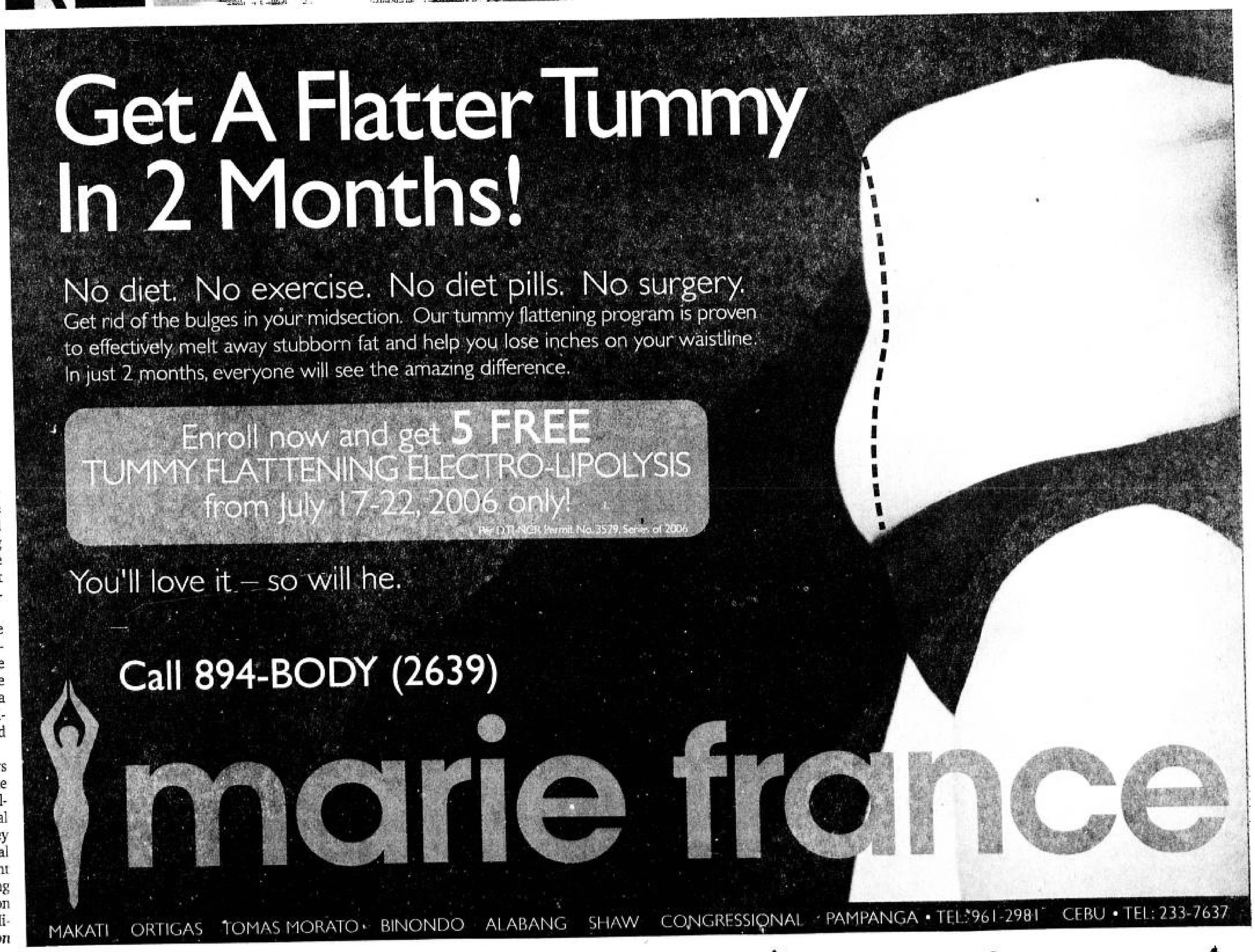
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OFWs' escape routes in Lebanon bombed

From page A1

workers in Lebanon, most of them employed as domestic workers.

"I'm certain our embassy will be able to find other areas where we could evacuate the other Filipinos," Asuque said.

The evacuation could only be done by land.

Alert level raised

"We will emphasize that this is the Filipino convoy and we are a neutral party in the situation," Asuque said.

Asuque said the obstacles in a possible evacuation were the closure of the Beirut international airport, highways and main roads, and the air and naval blockade imposed by the Israeli forces.

The embassy has raised to level 2 the alert for the Filipinos in Lebanon, which means they should be prepared for an evacuation.

"They should all be packed by now and be ready to go. We're preparing for the worst-case scenario, which is their evacuation. The embassy has a text brigade to inform our compatriots if there would be an evacuation," Asuque said.

He said the embassy, led by Ambassador Al Francis Bichara, had begun coordinating with United Nations agencies on the ground, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the governments of Israel and Lebanon to ensure the safety of the Filipino convoy in case an evacuation took place.

Special envoy Roy Cimatu, head of the Middle East Preparedness Team, has been dispatched by the government to Beirut to assess the situation and decide if an evacuation would be needed.

Cimatu was scheduled to leave last night, Asuque said.

"There's no movement yet. We will be waiting for Ambassador Cimatu's recommendation," Asuque said.

Asuque said the contracts of Filipino workers would most likely be suspended in light of the volatile security situation in Beirut.

Rockets on Haifa

"We have to face reality. The contracts would be suspended because the priority should be the safety of our workers," Asuque said.

Hezbollah militants have declared an open war against Israel following increased air strikes by the Israeli military.

In a dramatic escalation of the 5-day-old conflict, Lebanese guerrillas fired a relentless barrage of rockets into the northern Israeli city of Haifa on Sunday, killing eight people at a train station and wounding seven others.

Beirut bombed

Soon afterward, Israeli warplanes hit the south Beirut stronghold of Hezbollah with at least six air strikes, shaking the Lebanese capital and sending a cloud of thick smoke rising over the neighborhood.

The attack on Haifa raised Israel's death toll from the fighting to at least 23, 11 soldiers and 12 civilians. Israeli air strikes in Lebanon have killed 148 people, almost all of them civilians.

The attack came after Israel unleashed its fiercest bombardment yet of Beirut, reducing entire apartment buildings to rubble and knocking out electricity to many areas in the capital.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert vowed that there would be "far-reaching consequences" for the rocket attack—the deadliest ever to hit Israel.

Syria, Iran blamed

Smoke rose over Haifa and air raid sirens wailed as the dead and wounded were evacuated. Other rockets hit the city's major oil refinery, gas storage tanks and a major street during the busy morning rush hour.

Israeli authorities warned all residents in the central city of Tel Aviv and north to be on heightened alert, reflecting the longer range of the missile attacks.

Israeli officials blamed Syria and Iran for providing the weaponry that hit Haifa—raising the specter of a wider regional confrontation.

The Israeli Air Force dropped leaflets over south Lebanon telling residents to leave immediately before an imminent attack.

Escalation of fighting

"In two or three hours we are going to attack the south of Lebanon heavily," said Maj. Gen. Udi Adam, the head of Israel's northern command.

It was the sharpest escalation since fighting began last Wednesday after Hezbollah guerrillas penetrated Israel in brazen raid, killing eight soldiers and capturing another two. The fighting opened a second front for Israel, which had already been fighting Hamas-linked militants in the Gaza Strip following the capture of another Israeli soldier on June 25.

Israeli troops, tanks and helicopter gunships reentered northern Gaza on Sunday, firing missiles and exchanging gunfire with armed Palestinians in a raid that killed three militants.

Masked militants in Gaza vowed in a news conference Sunday to launch more rockets at Israel "to show solidarity with the twin of our resistance," referring to Hezbollah.

World leaders

In St. Petersburg, Russia, key world leaders struggled to draft a response to the raging crisis as US President George W. Bush defended Israel and blamed militants backed by Iran and Syria.

Leaders of the Group of Eight major industrialized nations jettisoned their original energy-focused agenda to grasp for consensus on the Middle East.

The United States pressed for a tough statement identifying the root cause of the violence as the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah and its allies Iran and Syria.

"As a sovereign nation, Israel has every right to defend itself against terrorist activity," Bush said after meeting British Prime Minister Tony Blair. "Our message to Israel is defend yourself, but be mindful of the consequences. And so we've urged restraint."

But many G8 partners, notably Russian President Vladimir Putin and some European leaders, say the Israeli assaults are "disproportionate" and a waste of innocent life. *With reports from AP, AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, July 17, 2006
15th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Is 1:10-17
Gospel: Matthew 10:34-11:1

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to establish peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father and daughter against her mother; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Each one will have as enemies those of one's own family.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. One who wants to benefit from his life will lose it; one who loses his life for my sake will find it.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. The one who welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive the reward of a prophet; the one who welcomes a just man because he is a just man will receive the reward of a just man. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is a disciple of mine, I assure you, he will not go unrewarded."

When Jesus had finished giving his twelve disciples these instructions, he went on from there to teach and to proclaim his message in their towns.

Commentary

Hear the Word! God is appalled by the sacrifices, rites and prayers that are constant drones and festivals that only serve to cover up the blood of the innocent and the misery they inflict upon the poor. Wash yourselves clean, redress wrongs, and take care of the least. It is the same always. And Jesus the prophet warns that he is here as a sign of contention, that his presence divides families, marriages and communities. We are ordered to choose where our primary allegiance lies: with others or with God in Jesus. We are to carry the cross and welcome the stranger and the poor. Are we prophets and holy people or are we wishy-washy trying to please all sorts of people in our life while claiming at the same time we claim that it is God who owns us?

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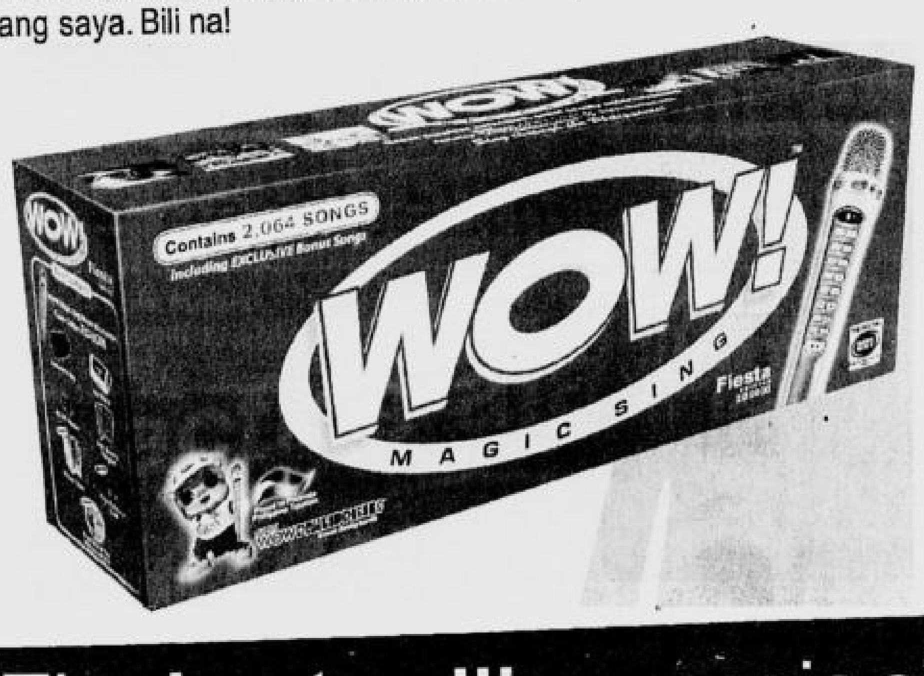

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OFWs up slightly in first semester

THE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKers deployed rose slightly in the first half of the year, the Department of Labor and Employment announced yesterday.

Citing a report from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, DOLE said 564,920 OFWs were deployed in the first half this year compared to 555,533 in the same period last year, or a 1.69 percent increase.

The number of deployed OFWs is more than half of the targeted one million workers deployed this year.

The deployed OFWs are composed of 428,157 documented land-based workers and 136,763 Filipino seafarers sent to over 180 host destinations worldwide between January 1 to June 29, 2006.

The POEA attributed the increase to the rehiring of land-based OFWs and to the increased demand for skilled Filipino seafarers.

Labor undersecretary Danilo Cruz said that the number of rehired land-based OFWs grew 6.8 percent to 288,820 as of June 29 from 270,440 in the same period in 2005. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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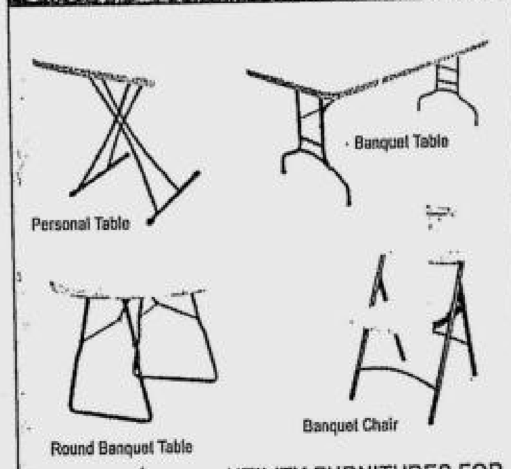

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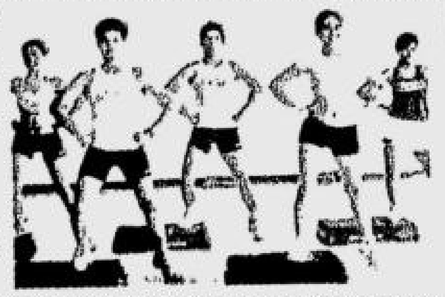

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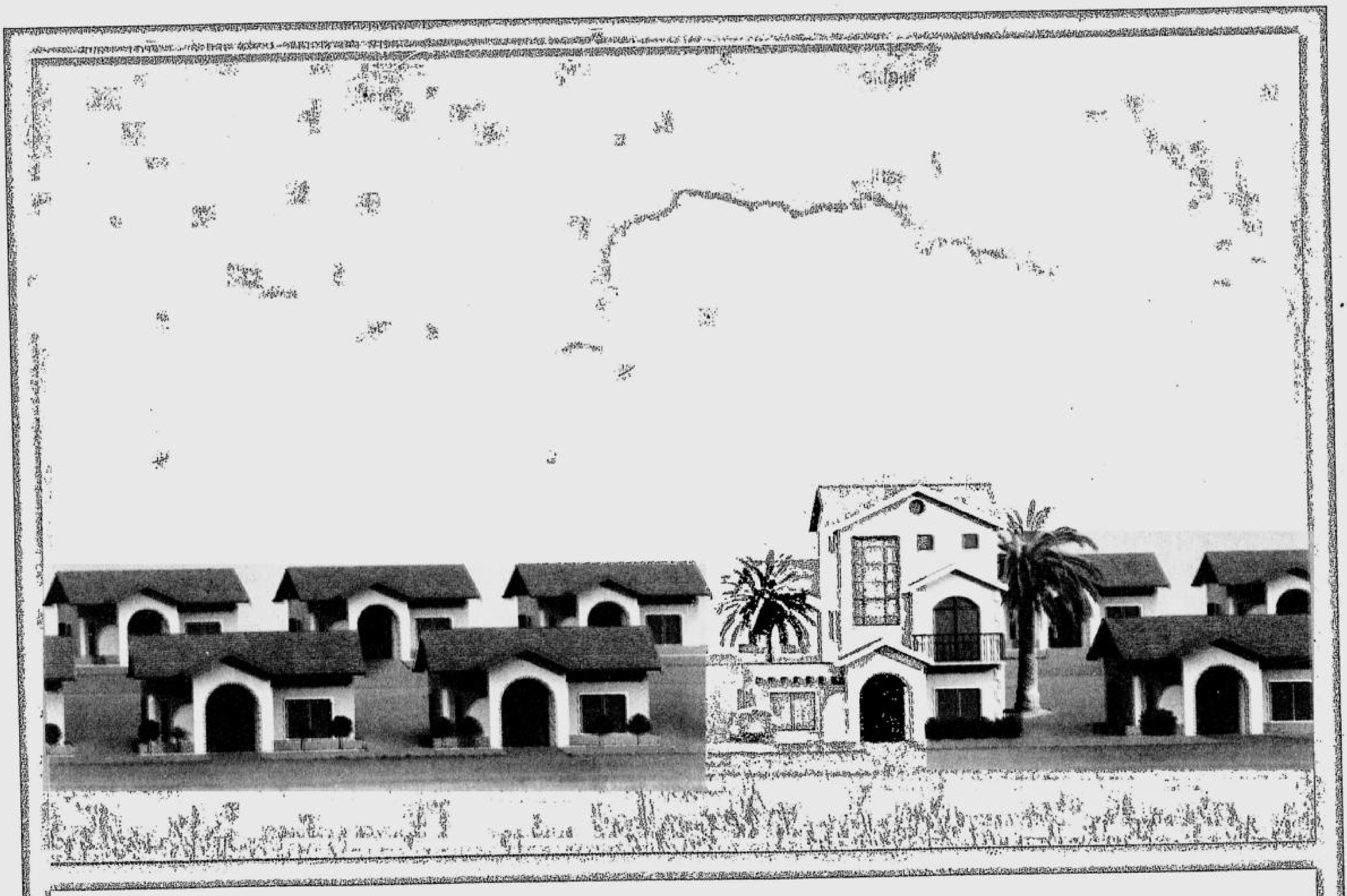

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Cebu, Bohol eyed as major tourist destinations

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—CEBU AND BOHOL will have the opportunity to showcase its tourist sites during a four-day tour organized for the participants of the second Ambassadors/Consuls General tour of the Philippines.

Patria Aurora Roa, regional director of the Department of Tourism in Central Visayas, said the program is part of the DOT's efforts to increase foreign tourist arrivals.

The ambassadors and consuls general to the United States and Canada as well as the tourism attachés assigned in these countries will lead the over 100 tour participants, most of whom are Filipino-Americans, Roa said.

The group arrived in Manila on July 15 and will leave for out-of-town tours tomorrow.

While Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano has focused on the short-haul tourism market last year, Roa said the DOT is also looking at the other markets, such as North America.

South Korea has become the top tourism market of Central Visayas but North American market remains the country's top source of tourists, she said.

She noted that there is an untapped market of Filipino-Americans who are holding US passports and have yet to visit the country.

"Hopefully, by word of mouth, they can help promote the Philippines. By putting them in hotels, not with their relatives here, they will be in a position to see the tourism development here," Roa added.

The first part of the tour in Manila included meeting President Macapagal-Arroyo, having lunch at Malacañang and touring its museum. They also participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Rizal Park. The tour package also included a city tour and, if the participants prefer, helping build a house in a Gawad Kalinga Village.

After four days in Manila, Roa said, the participants break into groups for the out-of-town tours. Aside from the Cebu-Bohol package, the other destinations include the Laguna Lake Loop, Iloilo/Guimaras, Boracay, Davao, Palawan, Laoag/Vigan/Baguio, Cagayan de Oro/Camiguin and Zamboanga.

In Cebu, the tour participants will be going on a city tour, which includes a visit to Fort San Pedro, the Magellan's Cross and the Heritage of Cebu Monument in the morning and a guitar factory in the afternoon.

Police accused of 'terrorizing' Bayan members

By Luige A. del Puerto

MILITANTS YESTERDAY ACCUSED THE POlice of "terrorizing" local chapters of the party-list group Bayan Muna in Quezon City and Manila ahead of President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address late this month.

Bayan Muna claimed that police sent plainclothesmen to some barangays asking the militant group's officers to report to Camp Crame, headquarters of the Philippine National Police.

"The modus operandi involves these officers approaching the barangay chairpersons with a letter containing the names of Bayan Muna members and notifying them that they should go to Camp Crame," said Robert de Castro, the group's deputy secretary general.

De Castro said officers on the ground reported the incident to party headquarters last week.

He said the move took place shortly after the PNP bared its security preparations for the Sona.

Metro Manila police chief Director Vidal Querol, however, denied that plainclothesmen were sent to seek out Bayan Muna leaders at the barangay level and to tell them to report to Camp Crame.

Querol said his only instructions to his staff were to "touch base" with militant leaders so they and the police could discuss their planned protest rallies on July 24.

"My instruction was to touch base with militant leaders, not to ask them to report to Crame. If they agree, they could talk in one place over breakfast. That would be okay," Querol said.

"What is important to me is that they can hold a rally within the ambit of BP 880," he said, referring to the law on public assembly.

"They must be accorded their rights (to express their opinion)," he added.

He reminded organizers anew to be vigilant following police reports that communist rebels would attempt to infiltrate the demonstrations and sow chaos.

The Metro Manila Police said it will deploy some 14,000 cops and soldiers at Congress and other places in the capital on July 24, making it one of the biggest security preparations this year.

The police has adopted an elaborate security plan for Sona after authorities seized high-powered firearms, blocks of explosives and blueprints of buildings inside the Batasan complex during a raid on a safe house of the Magdalo group of rebel soldiers In Quezon City two Fridays ago.

De Castro described the police's alleged moves as a "terror tactic."

"It is a prior restraint on our right to peaceful assembly. It is also an extension of the illegal (policy of) calibrated preemptive response—with dispersal happening right where the protesters start their way to the rally, their homes," he said.

"The same modus operandi is also being done in communities where other activist groups are present, r[illegible]ially in the communities near the Batas[illegible]mbansa complex," De Castro said.

Software documents rights violations

DAVAO CITY—Alarmed over the reported extra-judicial killings in the country, the Asia Foundation has tapped information technology (IT) to effectively monitor human rights in the country.

The project, dubbed Martus, would be pilot-tested in Mindanao and implemented in partnership with the Commission on Human Rights, according to Dr. Steven Rood, Asia Foundation representative.

Rood said they have chosen Mindanao because it is considered a hotspot in rights violations.

The project uses a software program designed to systematize the manner of documenting, storing and reporting information on human rights abuses in the country. It has been in development since 2002.

It would be fully implemented this year, Rood said.

CHR chair Purificacion Quisumbing said the implementation of the project would enable them to achieve competence, credibility and connectivity.

"The goal of the CHR to know the truth and give justice to human rights violations victims could not be reached unless it gets accurate information," Quisumbing said.

She said the Martus Project would replace the primitive manner, by which the CHR monitors human rights abuses in the country. *Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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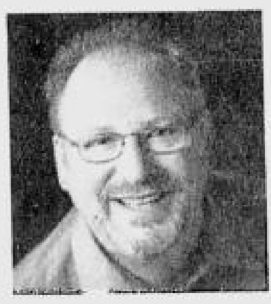

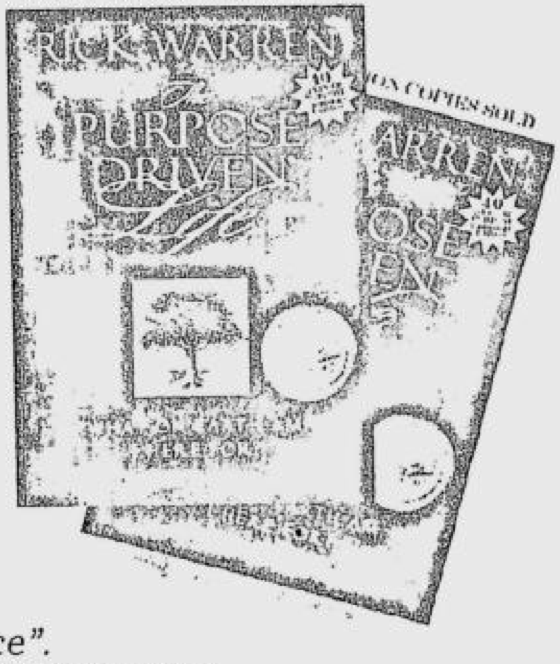

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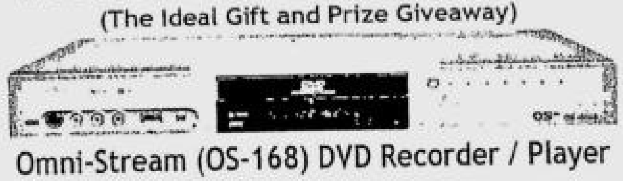

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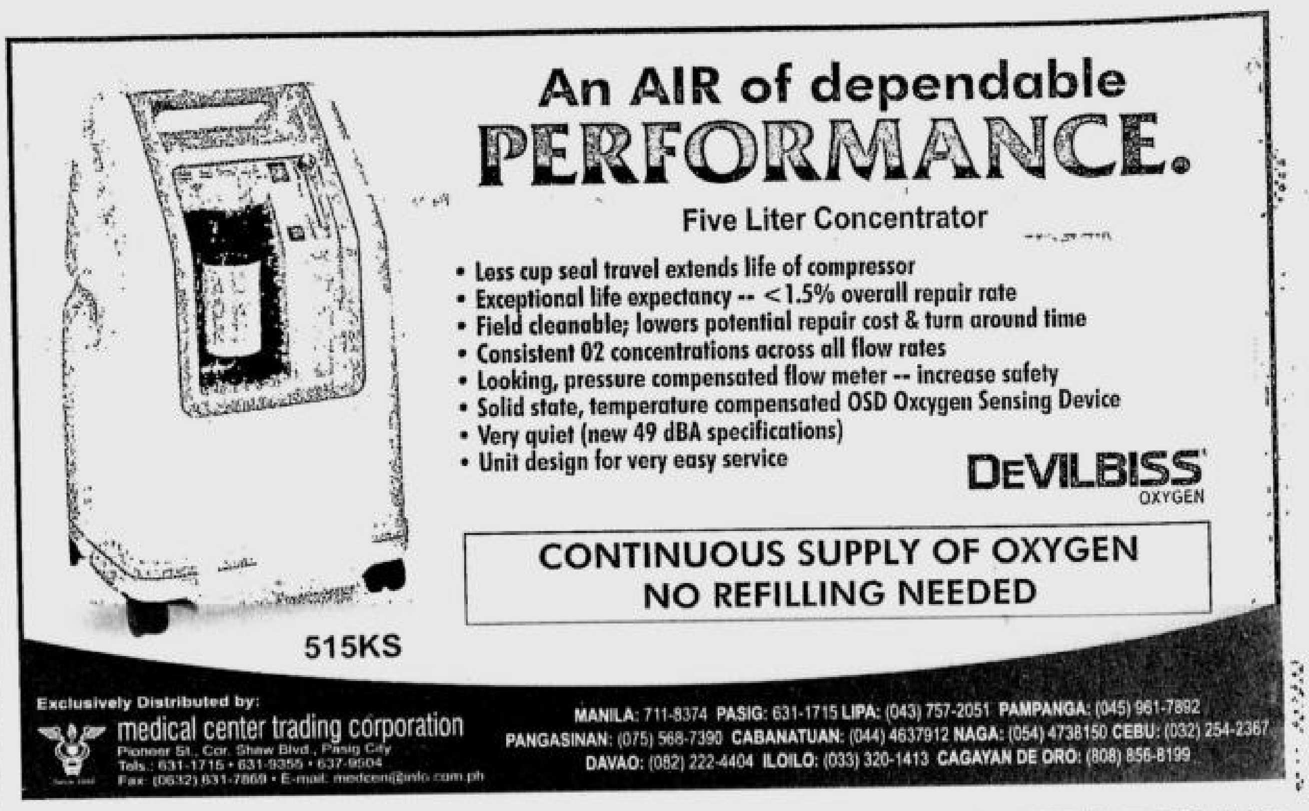
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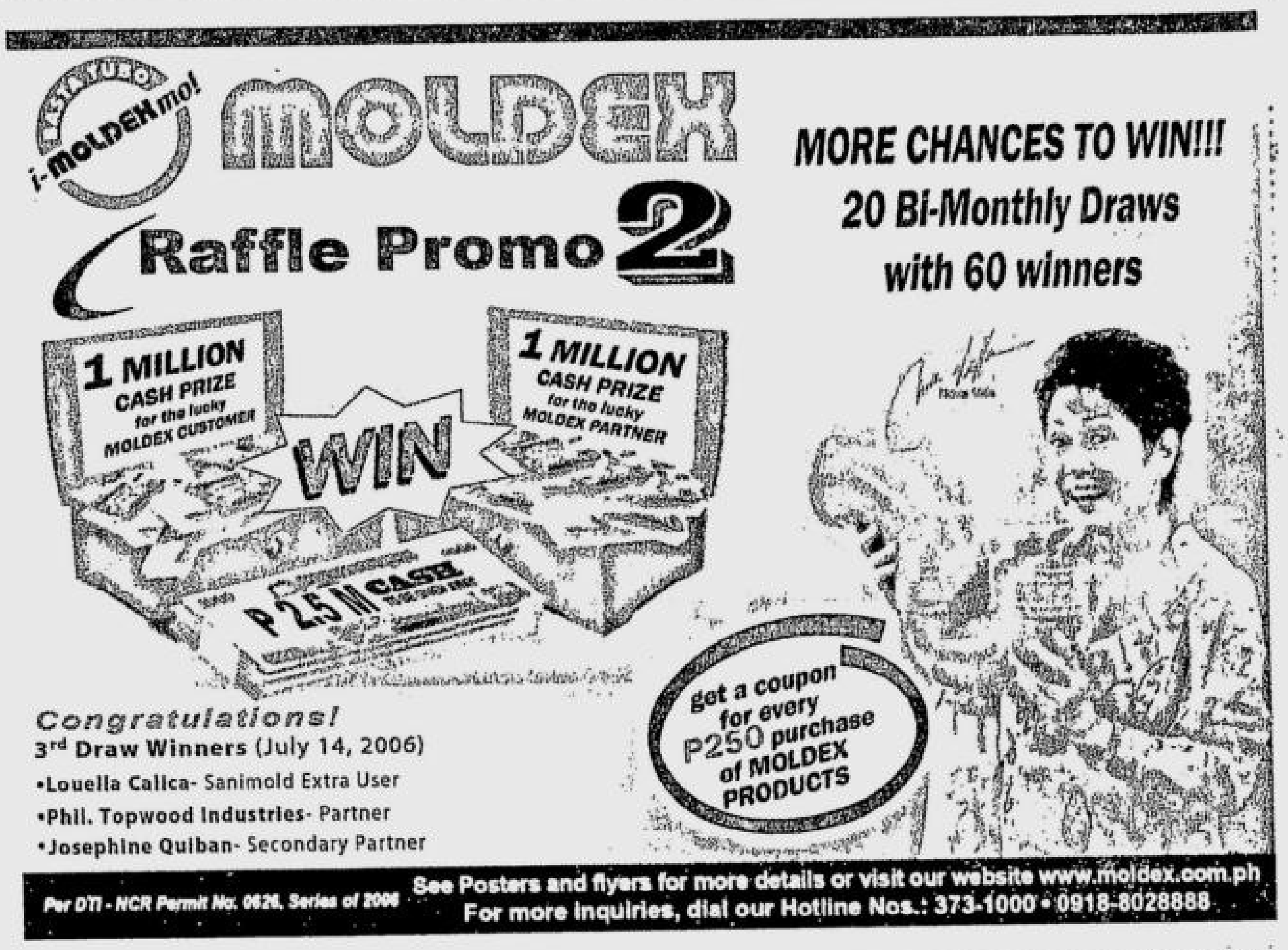
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DPC YELLOW PAGES

Vestments among Palace gifts, says CBCP official

From page A1

to win CBCP sympathy—like bringing food during a meeting and providing vestments for prelates.

On May 11, an unexpected Palace guest showed up with trays of food at the permanent council meeting of the CBCP in Manila, according to the source, who was present during the delivery.

Unknown to permanent council members who included Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the CBCP president, the trays had been waiting for them at lunchtime on the third-floor refectory of the CBCP office in Intramuros.

The members of the CBCP's policymaking body when the 124-member organization is not in plenary session were then gathered for the launching of the Year of Social Concerns.

Fr. Juanito Figura, the acting CBCP secretary general, was so appalled by the unexpected gift that he immediately asked his staff to send the trays back to its donor, according to the source, who declined to be named because of the sensitive nature of his position.

"He was fuming mad," the CBCP official told the INQUIRER in an interview on Friday. "He felt it was no innocent gift. He felt there was something political attached to it."

The donor was later identified as a certain Tony Adriano, said to be a lawyer, who was also seen with Fatima "Nena" Valdes, Malacañang's undersecretary for religious affairs, during the July 9-10 CBCP plenary assembly in Manila, he said.

Still, Adriano was reportedly anything but discouraged by Figura's rejection.

40 vestments

During the plenary gathering, Adriano reportedly purchased around 40 vestments to be distributed to a select group of bishops. A set of vestments, including the stole and the chasuble, costs between P5,000 and P10,000.

The source said the vestments were initially bought from Le Saints and the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master, two popular manufacturers of pastoral garments that also set up stalls during the CBCP meeting at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila.

While the gifts of food and vestments seemed innocent, the source said many members of the CBCP were wary of the political motive that might have been attached to them.

"We're just wondering why we're getting all these gifts when there are no occasions and nobody asked for them," he said.

The CBCP informant said Church officials were cautious that Malacañang might have been trying to shower them with gifts and favors in the hope that the strategy could cloud their judgment on key issues.

At least three bishops earlier admitted to the INQUIRER that they had been offered envelopes containing cash on separate occasions during the weeklong CBCP retreat and plenary assembly.

Pastoral statement

The plenary produced a pastoral statement on July 10 declaring that the prelates were "not inclined at the present moment to favor the impeachment process as a means of establishing the truth" on whether Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 election—a charge she has repeatedly denied.

Dipolog Bishop Jose Manguiran said two envelopes, each containing P15,000 cash, were slipped into his hands by a staff member of Valdes while the undersecretary was talking with him about so-called livelihood assistance from the government.

Another bishop from a poor diocese in Mindanao said he had a similar experience with Valdes and her staff and rejected the envelope right away.

The 69-year-old Manguiran, who had described the incident as an attempt to bribe the bishops, immediately asked Father Figura to return the envelopes to Malacañang. They included a letter explaining his reasons, a copy of which he still keeps to prove that his hands were clean.

Envelopes

"We were not influenced by these envelopes passed on to us," Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, the CBCP vice president, yesterday told the Church-run Radio Veritas.

The Cagayan de Oro prelate earlier told the INQUIRER that he himself had been offered an envelope during a meeting with Cabinet secretaries on July 3, the eve of the CBCP meeting.

He said the envelopes, similarly offered to at least nine other bishops from Mindanao who came to the luncheon in Intramuros, contained cash and plane tickets.

Ledesma said he and the other bishops were told that these were reimbursements of their expenses for the Manila trip.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday described these incidents as "one big buying spree of the present administration."

"It is fair to conclude that they were meant to buy support for the benefactor. For Malacañang and its avid allies to think and say otherwise would be the conclusion of either angelic innocence or the thinking process of an alien from a distant planet," the Lingayen-Dagupan prelate said in a statement.

PNP starts probing coup financiers

From page A1

lez said there were no sacred cows and that the government would go after all those involved, including the financiers.

"The President ordered us to go after destabilizers. There was a general instruction that we should run after them. That's why she called on the police and military to work together," Gonzalez told the INQUIRER.

"We'll go after all these people even if they are businessmen. What makes businessmen sacred cows? If you are a businessman involved in destabilization, you should know the repercussions," he said.

Those proven to be financing the destabilization efforts could be charged with either sedition or coup d'etat, depending on their participation, he added.

But evidence needed

Gonzalez earlier said the government had identified at least 20 prominent businessmen and other people who gave "direct" aid to the plotters. He said some of these people bankrolled the failed Feb. 24 coup plot while the others had been helping in the destabilization efforts since last year.

The justice secretary would not say if Ms Arroyo, who has left on a visit to Libya, has been told of the identities of these people. He would not answer, either, when asked if the government would be open to a compromise with the so-called financiers of the plot, saying that would depend on the President's policy.

Gonzalez also stressed that even though the government had information about the identities of the financiers, the matter would have to be carefully checked to ensure there was evidence against them.

"Even if we know the names of the people, we don't know if there is specific evidence against them. You have to see to it that information is properly evaluated, but it is enough to let the whole world know what we are doing," he said.

Who is the mastermind?

The justice secretary said announcing that the government knew the identities of the financiers was meant to inform the public that the government was doing its job of running after those who violated the law.

Gonzalez said the investigation should not stop at those who involved in overt actions.

"Rebel soldiers can't do what they did without support. We're looking at all directions. You don't isolate them. That's not the way to investigate," he said.

He pointed out that solving a murder did not necessarily stop with the arrest of the gunman because the mastermind who recruited him had to be found.

"Maybe he (the mastermind) will be more guilty," Gonzalez added.

San Juan, Bumidang

Calderon said either the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group or the National Bureau of Investigation would be inviting the people alleged to be the civilian backers of the Magdalo rebel group.

"By Monday, we might already be able to give names," he said.

Police are still awaiting the sworn statements of two rebel officers who had signified their intention to cooperate in the widening probe into the extent of civilian support for the rebel soldiers.

The testimony of 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan and 2nd Lt. Patricio Bumidang will be crucial to the building of a case against their backers, police said.

Authorities arrested San Juan in Batangas in February while Bumidang, along with five other Magdalo officers and two civilians, was captured in a safe house in Quezon City on July 7.

Can refuse invitation

In a phone interview, CIDG chief Director Jesus Versoza issued a challenge to people who will be summoned by the police or the NBI in the coming days.

"They have the right to refuse [an invitation] and to remain silent," Versoza said. "But if they want to clear their names—because (Ambassador Roy) Señeres mentioned their names very openly—they (should) tell what they know or deny (the allegations)."

Señeres mentioned the names of at least five prominent businessmen as being supposedly involved in the February plot.

Versoza said police investigators expected to get Bumidang's and San Juan's statements within the week.

"They can tell about their meetings and plans, and who faced them, and (who made) financial contributions," he said. "This will be very crucial evidence."

4 names in laptop

Police have also retrieved the names of at least four political personalities from a laptop computer and documents supposedly taken from the Magdalo safe house in Fil-Invest 2.

Versoza said the PNP had a total of 10 names, including code names, of the group's alleged backers in the private and political sectors.

Versoza said some of the names mentioned by Señeres did not register in the police's radar earlier.

"They were new names," he said.

"Right now, we have around 10 personalities and we are studying various information pertaining to their participation," Versoza said.

In an interview with the INQUIRER last week, Señeres mentioned the names of former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos, former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, ABC-5 chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, construction mogul F.F. Cruz Jr. and old-rich scion Iñigo Zobel.

Dossier against Cabinet?

Malacañang said the authorities would not stop until all those behind the plot had been caught and brought to justice.

"Our law enforcement authorities will not cease until the unseen hands behind the intricate plot that nearly ruined our democracy are all held accountable," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said Malacañang had also been alerted that certain groups out to destabilize the government were compiling a dossier against Cabinet members in a bid to malign their character and person. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Talks with Reds show Magdalo split

From page A1

Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), as part of a move this year to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

San Juan had joined the group of captains and lieutenants calling themselves Magdalo that briefly occupied the Oakwood Premier Hotel in Makati City in July 2003 and demanded Ms Arroyo's resignation. He escaped from military detention in January but was captured a month later.

Leftist-rightist plot

On Feb. 24, Ms Arroyo declared a weeklong state of national state of emergency, citing a plot to oust her by leftist and rightist conspirators.

Magdalo has denied that it was working with the communist insurgents. The group says San Juan's talks with the CPP-NPA was his own affair.

The source said it was possible that it was the MKP that was conducting talks with the communist insurgents, since San Juan was a founding member of the group, and based on the military and media reports following San Juan's arrest.

One of the sources said that San Juan's group, formed sometime last year, had recruited members from both "active and detained (Magdalo) officers."

"The Magdalo and the MKP are two different groups, contrary to what has been reported before that the Magdalo had changed its name to the MKP," the sources said.

MKP members

The MKP is made up of officers who were not able to proceed to Oakwood, as well as some of the Army detainees, the sources added.

Among the MKP members were some of the Magdalo officers who last year signed a manifesto pledging allegiance to the Constitution and the Armed Forces.

As to the MKP's objectives, one of the sources said: "It is to replicate what the Magdalo has done—the recruitment, consolidation, and the final action would be similar to Oakwood, or probably even something bigger."

Another source put it in more diplomatic terms: "The MKP perhaps mainly wanted to change the government into a better one."

The group also had its own rituals, such as dipping dog tags in blood mixed with red wine, and its own flag, designed by a certain Lieutenant Ambi. The sources said Ambi was among the Oakwood mutineers who managed to elude detention after the surrender of the rebel officers and soldiers.

Police probe of MKP

Director Jesus Versoza of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said police investigation showed that the MKP was the "political name" of the Magdalo group.

"It was the MKP that represented (Magdalo) in the tactical alliance with the CPP-NPA," he said. As far as the police is concerned, the Magdalo and the MKP are the same group, he said.

"They also created Tabak for their psychological offensive," he added, referring to the group that claimed responsibility for a series of recent bombings in Metro Manila and elsewhere in Luzon that caused minor damage but no casualties.

But Versoza said there could be groupings within Magdalo because the members were not always together. Their reading of events might have differed, he said.

Magdalo leaders were aware that San Juan was forming the group with some other officers, but the junior officer did not particularly seek Magdalo's permission.

In fact, some Magdalo soldiers were "surprised" to learn about the MKP from media interviews with San Juan and 1st Lt. Sonny Sarmiento when the two officers were still on the run.

'Virtually dead'

The sources said the MKP was now "virtually dead."

Some of its members had squealed on the group to the military after their arrest, such as Captains Allan Jones Salem and Rey Gubantes, the sources said.

"There are still many unaccounted members of the MKP. Some of them remain at large while others remain in active service," they said.

The sources said Magdalo leaders such as Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV had always "respected the decision of the group's members."

Even recaptured Magdalo leader, Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, also had his own agenda, which was to urge civil disobedience. *With a report from Luige A. del Puerto*

Fireworks show keeps Mayon villagers awake

From page A1

is imminent within hours to days," resident volcanologist Eduardo Laguerta said after the volcano gave a frightening "fireworks display" on Saturday night.

"From 6 a.m. on Saturday to 6 a.m. on Sunday, our instruments recorded a total of 111 volcanic tremors, a significant increase from Friday to Saturday's 22," he told Reuters.

An estimated 60,000 people in Albay would be evacuated in the event of a major eruption, disaster officials said.

Legazpi Mayor Noel Rosal said in a radio interview that even wild animals, such as boars and snakes, had begun descending from Mayon and that springs on the lower slopes of the mountain were drying up, all of which were "a bad sign."

Residents in Barangay Padang here feared there would be more lava explosions.

"Mayon appears to be ready to explode but wants to hold everybody in suspense, which is more frightening for us," villager Elvie Echaluce said. "We don't know what will happen next—but we're ready to evacuate anytime."

Jose Mirafuentes, 41, of Barangay Matnog in neighboring Daraga, said that for two days now, he had been awakened by rumbling sounds at night, despite his having drunk more than enough liquor to knock him out.

No sleep

"It was louder on Saturday night to early Sunday morning. I could not sleep anymore," said Mirafuentes, who lives in a village right at the foot of the 2,474-meter mountain, one of the country's 22 active volcanoes.

Mirafuentes was specially worried about his neighbor, Salvador, who was still up in the volcano, making copra. Fortunately, Salvador returned home early morning yesterday.

During the past 24-hour observation period, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) noted a significant increase in the bulge of advancing lava, which rolled down to a distance of about 800 meters from the summit.

Phivolcs said it was a clear indication of the volcano's mounting unrest.

Danger zone

Laguerta said the increase in the rate of the lava flow showed greater pressure at work inside the volcano.

The increase in the lava extrusion rate was accompanied by an increase in sulfur dioxide emissions—from the previous 1,251 tons per day to 2,221 tons—as measured Saturday morning, Phivolcs said.

Its latest bulletin said the lava flows and rock avalanches all occurred within the 6-km radius permanent danger zone, which covers parts of five municipalities with a total population of 3,000 families, or 15,825 people.

Southeast slopes

Laguerta said Phivolcs was keeping close watch on the volcano's southeastern slopes, believed to be the most highly critical area as it is in that direction where lava and other volcanic emissions go.

The area covers some parts of Legazpi and the towns of Sto. Domingo and Daraga.

The danger zone was extended to 7 km on the southeastern slopes on Saturday.

Alert Level 3 has been up since Friday night, which means that volcanic quakes and tremor may become more frequent, the emission of sulfur dioxide may increase.

Alert levels

Laguerta said there was a big possibility of the alert level being raised to 4 if tremors continued within the next few days.

At alert level 3, a dangerous hazardous explosion is considered possible; at 4, it is seen as likely, and at 5, the highest alert, an eruption has occurred with lava flows or ash columns reaching 6 km.

Laguerta said the latest volcanic activities indicated a high probability that there would be a major eruption.

"The development of its activity is quite disturbing for the past days," Laguerta said. "That's why our monitoring is now becoming more critical as far as the contingency plans of the local governments and the OCD (Office of Civil Defense) are concerned."

Watching the fireworks

On the streets of Legazpi, residents watched rocks and other debris cascading from the crater, raising brownish-gray clouds of dust.

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council is already coordinating with concerned agencies on the possible evacuation of people residing in barangays Bonga, Padang and Buyuan.

PDCC operating officer Cedric Daep said all concerned areas had been advised of contingency measures.

An eruption warning system is already in place for the quick evacuation of threatened communities, and radio stations have been told to broadcast emergency calls, said operations officer Jukes Nuñez.

Appeals from officials

Gov. Fernando Gonzales renewed his call on those living within the 6-km danger zone to evacuate to avoid possible casualties.

Mayor Rosal advised residents within the zone to gather their livestock and cattle in a safe place as part of evacuation preparations.

"Our farmers in the danger zone should stop for awhile and not enter there because we never know what will happen. There could be a sudden eruption," he said.

Mayon started spilling lava and debris on Friday in what some volcanologists said was the beginning of a silent eruption.

Violent history

A series of eruptions also shook the volcano in 2001, forcing 50,000 people to flee.

Mayon has erupted about 50 times since 1616. Its most violent eruption, in 1814, killed more than 1,200 people and buried an entire town in volcanic mud. A 1993 blast killed 79 people.

The Philippines lies in the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where volcanic activities and earthquakes are common. *With reports from Reuters, AFP, AP*

Gov't prepared, says Bunye

WITH PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo away on a state visit to Libya, Malacañang yesterday gave assurances that the government was ready for any contingency should Mount Mayon unleash a major eruption.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the National Disaster Coordinating Council and the local government units were "on top of all disaster preparedness measures to ensure the safety of the residents who may be directly affected by the volcanic activity."

"We appeal to residents and travellers to adhere to the off-limit zones and to abide by the contingency measures being implemented by authorities," Bunye said in a statement.

"Preparedness and coordination between the concerned government agencies, the local government units, as well as the communities in the area would be the key in maintaining zero-casualty in the event that a major eruption occurs," he said. *Christine O. Avendaño*

Chavez sees RP-US plot in Bolante case

From page A1

the US Embassy to cancel Bolante's visa and only asked for help in locating Bolante and serving its summons on him.

"We are all being taken for a ride here. This seems to be a tactical plan of Malacañang. *Malakanyang ang pumitik dito* (Malacañang is behind this)," Chavez said.

"Magsaysay's request was made a long time ago and there was no action on it. The Senate was also only asking for assistance in locating Bolante and serving its summons in the hope of bringing him back. They did not ask for a cancellation of his visa," he added.

Palace intervened?

Chavez said Malacañang must have intervened when it heard about Magsaysay's request and asked the US government to cancel Bolante's visa.

"From all indications, Malacañang intervened and worked very hard on this. Why? Because Bolante was complaining that he has been under a lot of pressure trying to get in and out of the country without people noticing him," Chavez said.

"This would also be an effective means of thwarting any kind of local process in the Philippines to hold him accountable. So his visa was cancelled and he applied for asylum. That was why he was not deported," he added.

Chavez also noted that the DFA had kept mum for six days about Bolante's arrest in Los Angeles on July 7.

"Why the silence? It's like saying, 'Mission accomplished. Let him stay there,'" he said.

Credible fear hearing

Chavez said he had heard reports from the DFA that a "credible fear hearing" had already started in the United States for Bolante's asylum application.

"That only comes into play after an application for asylum has been filed," he said.

He said that in a credible fear hearing, Bolante would have to present proof that he is in danger of persecution in the Philippines for reasons of his race, religion and political beliefs and association.

"He can stay in the US so long as his deportation or asylum application process is pending and that could last for a long time if he gets a good American lawyer. It could be dribbled from three to five years," Chavez said.

Once the process starts, the Senate or the Philippine government will not be able to do anything to bring him back to the country until it is completed, he said. "The Senate can rave and rant, but that is the reality."

Rescue ally in distress

In Congress, two representatives said Malacañang should mount a rescue effort for Bolante, calling him an ally in distress.

Rep. Isidoro Real of Zamboanga del Sur, vice chair of the House committee on good government, said that like any ordinary Filipino citizen, Bolante was entitled to assistance from the Philippine government.

"If our government was able to extend help to Filipinos arrested abroad who have pending cases here, what more of those who have no cases like Bolante?" he said.

Real called on the politicians and the public to hold off judgment on the man at the center of the fertilizer scam pending the determination of the cause of the cancellation of his US visa.

The lawmaker noted that no criminal case had been filed against Bolante.

Rep. Edwin Uy of Isabela, vice chair of the House committee on agriculture and food, said Bolante was not a fugitive from justice although he had snubbed repeatedly a Senate inquiry into the fund mess.

No case yet

"If a case had been previously lodged against him in court, I believe he would have faced this. And even if a case is filed against him now, I feel he will face this to clear his name," said the lawmaker.

Uy said speculations about his canceled visa and the fertilizer fund scam were meant to muddle his immigration case in the United States.

"Let us not jump to conclusions. Our officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs have already assured there is no intention to keep his arrest under wraps," he said.

Real, however, urged the Ombudsman to finish its own inquiry into the scam pending the resolution of the visa cancellation issue.

"If it finds that Bolante has any liability, charges should be filed before the proper forum which is the court," he said. ***With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac***

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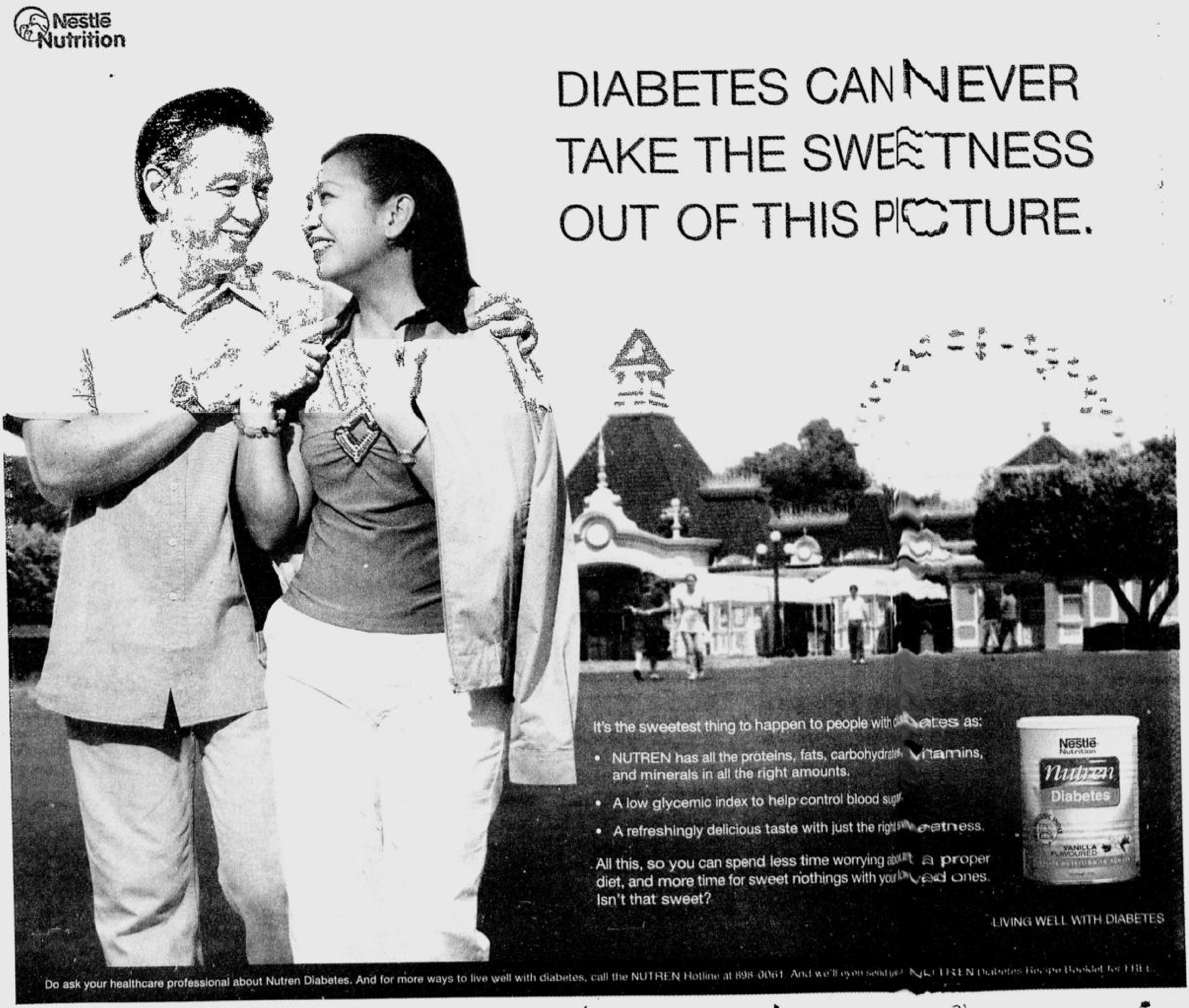

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Militant students oppose Lapus appointment

By Alcuin Papa

MILITANTS STUDENTS GROUPS YESterday joined the mounting clamor against the appointment of Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus as the new secretary of the Department of Education.

The Kabataan Party said the appointment of Lapus showed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "low regard for education" adding that the legislator's appointment was a clear insult to the agency's bureaucracy particularly to equally-qualified DepEd officials.

"While Rep. Lapus also has the credentials to qualify as a DepEd chief, the fact remains that there are other career officials within the department that are equally-qualified and have long and actual experience of running the agency," Kabataan Party president Raymond Palatino said.

He added that the appointment of Lapus was "payoff" for his sponsorship of the value added tax (VAT) law.

For his part, Kabataan Party vice president Carl Marc Ramota urged DepEd Officer-in-Charge Fe Hidalgo to "stand up and speak up for DepEd."

"She must resist this kind of treatment from the Palace. All of these only show the administration's low regard for the department and the education sector as a whole," said Ramota.

Marco Delos Reyes, president of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) said education continues to suffer because of "crony politics."

"The unfortunate victim is education, but the most unfortunate are the schoolchildren," Delos Reyes said.

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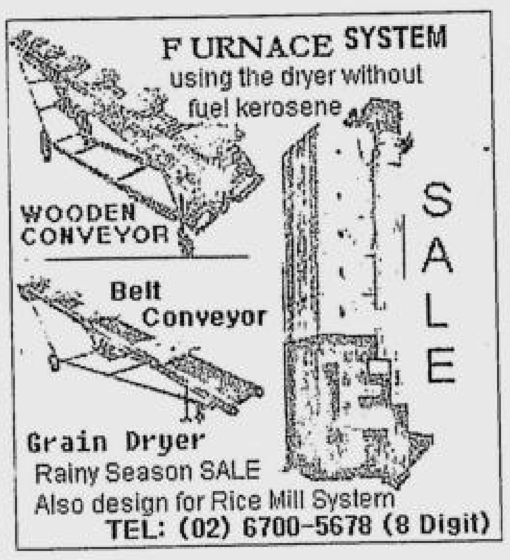

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A11

TUCP backs pay hike for state workers

THE PROPOSED 2007 budget should provide for a P2,000 salary increase for some 1.175 million civil servants, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines said yesterday.

TUCP general secretary Ernesto Herrera said that Malacañang and Congress are supposed to provide a living wage for its workers, and an increase in their monthly salaries should be forthcoming.

"We are definitely counting on government's proposed spending program for next year to include an item that would restore whatever buying power public sector workers have lost to consumer price increases," Herrera said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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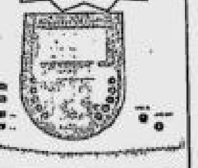

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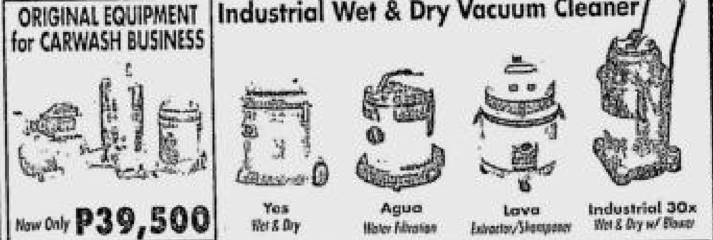

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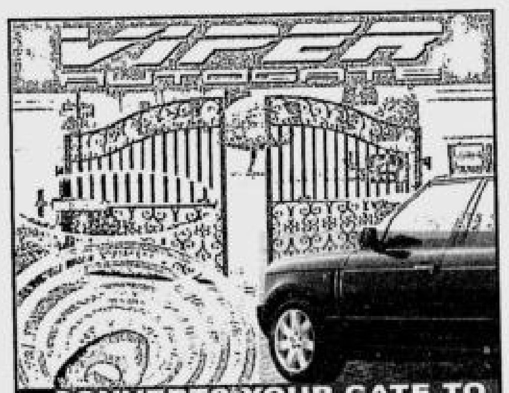

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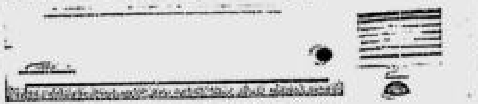

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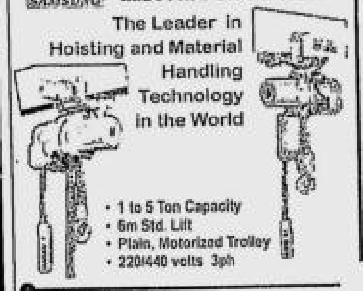

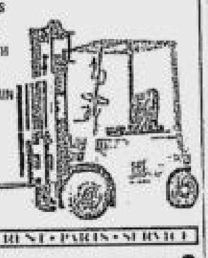

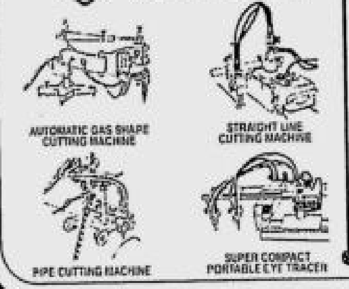

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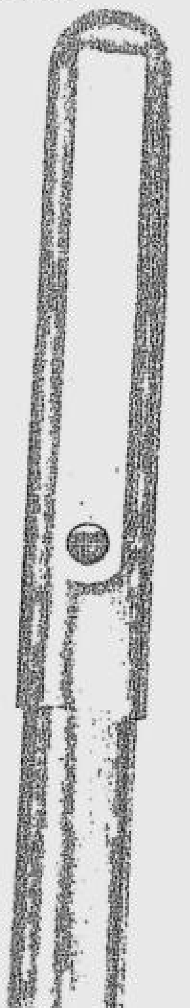

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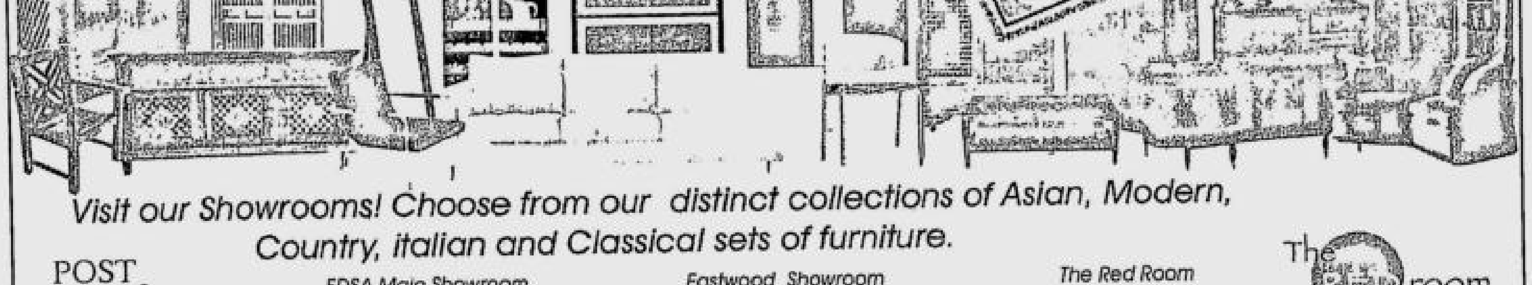

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Militant students oppose Lapus appointment

By Alcuin Papa

MILITANTS STUDENTS GROUPS YESterday joined the mounting clamor against the appointment of Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus as the new secretary of the Department of Education.

The Kabataan Party said the appointment of Lapus showed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "low regard for education" adding that the legislator's appointment was a clear insult to the agency's bureaucracy particularly to equally-qualified DepEd officials.

"While Rep. Lapus also has the credentials to qualify as a DepEd chief, the fact remains that there are other career officials within the department that are equally-qualified and have long and actual experience of running the agency," Kabataan Party president Raymond Palatino said.

He added that the appointment of Lapus was "payoff" for his sponsorship of the value added tax (VAT) law.

For his part, Kabataan Party vice president Carl Marc Ramota urged DepEd Officer-in-Charge Fe Hidalgo to "stand up and speak up for DepEd."

"She must resist this kind of treatment from the Palace. All of these only show the administration's low regard for the department and the education sector as a whole," said Ramota.

Marco Delos Reyes, president of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) said education continues to suffer because of "crony politics."

"The unfortunate victim is education, but the most unfortunate are the schoolchildren," Delos Reyes said.

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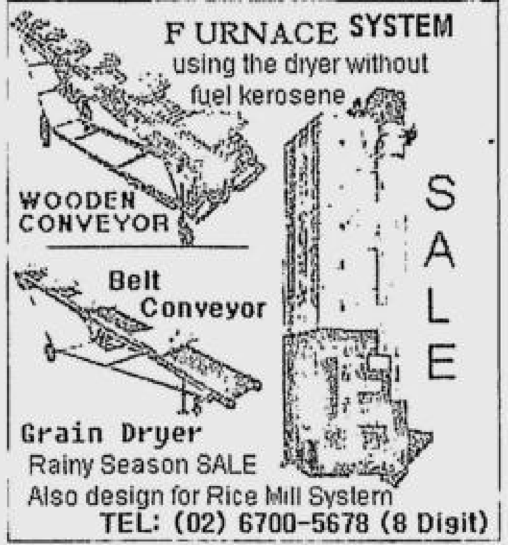
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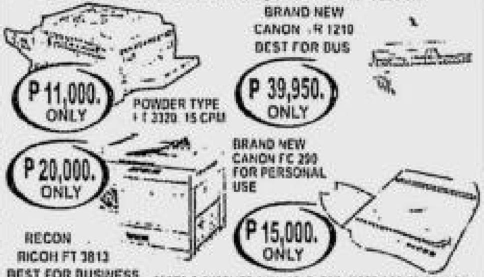
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TUCP backs pay hike for state workers

THE PROPOSED 2007 budget should provide for a P2,000 salary increase for some 1.175 million civil servants, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines said yesterday.

TUCP general secretary Ernesto Herrera said that Malacañang and Congress are supposed to provide a living wage for its workers, and an increase in their monthly salaries should be forthcoming.

"We are definitely counting on government's proposed spending program for next year to include an item that would restore whatever buying power public sector workers have lost to consumer price increases," Herrera said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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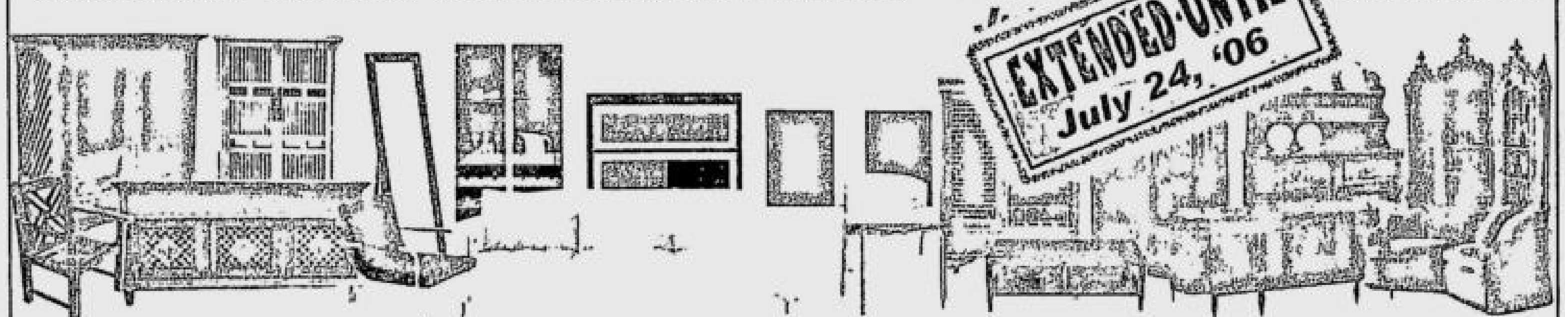

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Papal envoy raises alarm over killings of activists

THE PAPAL ENVOY TO THE Philippines yesterday expressed alarm at the growing number of murders of journalists and activists, saying the country's reputation was suffering.

"I am surprised to see that in the Philippines, there is still an activity of high incidence of a moral and political violence against those who profess different political ideologies," Papal Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni said.

Filoni told a forum that while the Church was heartened by President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent abolition of the death penalty, the positive image created by this act was damaged by the rash of murders.

"It will truly be a contradiction, if on the one hand, we practically abolished the death penalty and yet on the other hand we are not respecting or implementing the rights of the human race," he added.

Ms Arroyo won praise from Pope Benedict XVI in a personal meeting at the Vatican last month when she presented him with the documents on the abolition of the death penalty—a longtime priority of the Church in this country.

Filoni did not say who might be behind the murders, which leftist groups have widely blamed on the Arroyo administration.

Leftist groups have said that nearly one hundred of their members have been murdered since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

Five journalists have been murdered this year compared to seven last year, leading the Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) to say in a 2006 report that "after Iraq, the Philippines is the most dangerous country for journalists." *AFP*

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CBCP letter masterpiece of ecclesiastical hedging

From page A1

who reads it can draw any interpretation that suits his/her fancy or prejudices.

As such, it is not an illuminating document and it is not helpful in making moral judgments on the impeachment issue. The laity is left on its own to read the minds of their bishops. In this circumstance, determination of the truth lies in the eyes of the beholder.

The bishops, who are too quick to meddle in politics, have been cruel in their document to their flock by avoiding categorical pronouncements on the impeachment issue.

Key phrase

The key phrase in the six-page "Pastoral Letter on Social Concerns of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines," comprising no less than 40 paragraphs, is contained in Paragraph 24, headed "Impeachment."

The paragraph reads: "In the light of previous circumstances, we are not inclined at the present moment to favor the impeachment process as the means for establishing the truth.

"For unless the process and rules as well as the mind-sets of all participating parties, pro and con, are guided by no other motive than genuine concern for the common good, impeachment will once again serve as an unproductive political exercise, dismaying every citizen, and deepening the citizen's negative perception of politicians."

The letter touched on other major issues—electoral reform, Charter change and extrajudicial executions. But the heart of the document and its most compelling issue is impeachment.

The administration seized the phrase that—impeachment "will once again serve as an unproductive political exercise ... deepening the citizen's negative perception of politicians"—as a signal to members of Congress not to pursue the futile exercise in the search of truth.

The phrase provided relief to the Arroyo administration in the face of another impeachment siege and left it with the belief that the bishops are on its side on the contentious question of not giving due course to the new impeachment complaints.

Momentum dampened

It is uncertain whether the complaint would secure the required 78 votes in the House to enable the lower chamber to endorse the case to the Senate for trial. This is the practical consequence of the pastoral letter. The letter could dampen a momentum building up behind the complaints.

It may be said that the pastoral letter is an accurate description of the political reality and, in that sense, it reflects the bishops' recognition of the political pragmatism involved in the impeachment process.

Clearly, the failure of two impeachment actions during the past five years has not been lost on the bishops.

- In the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada in 2000, the process was frustrated by the suppression of the evidence on his banking transactions.
- Last year, the process was aborted when the House voted to kill the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo through the overwhelming number of the proadministration majority.

In effect, the bishops are cautioning the public against unrealistic expectations and bracing them for further disappointments, given the same balance of forces in Congress as last year.

No less cynical

The pastoral letter suggests that the bishops are no less cynical than secular observers about the remote possibility that Ms Arroyo would not spare any effort or political resource to kill the complaints in the satanic mills of the legislative process.

There are dissenting voices among the CBCP members, including Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez who has filed one of the four impeachment complaints.

In order not to be accused of muzzling its members, the CBCP covered its flanks, saying that "we respect the position of individuals or groups that wish to continue using the impeachment process as the means for establishing the truth."

The pastoral letter points out that unless people participating in the impeachment process are guided "by no other motive than genuine concern for the common good," impeachment would become an "unproductive political exercise."

It is hard to determine who among the participants is purely motivated by "genuine concern for the common good." All the participants claim they had brought about the action for the common good.

Laissez-faire policy

The effect of this laissez-faire policy is that the bishops have given up on impeachment as the legal process to bring closure to the electoral rigging issue as well as to the removal of Ms Arroyo from office before the end of her term.

The pastoral letter has left open the resolution of the crisis of the President's legitimacy by other means, allowing the intervention of other forces outside the constitutional framework.

It has not helped the long-term stability of the Arroyo administration. All it did was to give the President a short-term gain.

Lesson from killer quake: Don't take life for granted

From page A1

"We were on a break and I was on my way to get tea when the building trembled and the lights instantly turned out," Roco, 62, recalls.

"I immediately hid under the table. It was totally dark and I was lying on my back, trying to survey my surroundings with my hands," she says.

Is this the end?

"My head was resting on the feet of a man. His feet were shaking for a while and then stopped. He died at that instant."

The first thought that ran in her mind was it was the end, she says. "I reviewed my life, prayed for my family, and thanked God for everything. I was ready to die."

Other people were calling on God and screaming for help, Roco says. "*Panginoon!* (God!), they screamed."

With her in the room was her sister-in-law, Esperanza "Peachy" Roco, wife of the senator's brother Cho, who was also a seminar participant. "When I asked her if she was all right, she said she got pinned down," Sonia says.

"Another man had a flashlight and a watch, and we asked him the time once in a while until his flashlight ran out of battery," she says.

While she was relatively comfortable with her position, Sonia knew that the table had already caved in.

"It was a time when all I learned in Catholic school got encapsulated," Sonia says.

"The image of Jesus sleeping in the storm was vivid to me. The apostles were asking for His help and I was doing just that," she says. "I was praying the whole time."

Rescue mission

Her prayers were answered at around 6 p.m. the next day, when she heard helicopters surveying the area.

"We made noises. I was knocking my feet hard on the table for the rescuers to hear," she says. Soon, she heard somebody asking, "*Sino-sino kayo?* (Who are you?)" And they screamed to the top of their lungs for help.

The rescuers were cadets from Charlie Company of the Philippine Military Academy.

"They were using jackhammers. But many were screaming for them to stop because they got pinned down all the more. In my case, the table could have given in to the rubble and the ceiling would have landed on my chest," Sonia says.

Then silence enveloped them.

"We thought we were already abandoned," Sonia recalls. "I was thirsty and hungry. My lips were drying and I was trembling."

Digging from under

But it was just the time when miners from Benguet arrived to help in the rescue. They resorted to a mining strategy by digging from under to reach the victims.

"At around 11 p.m., they were boring a hole near my feet," Sonia says. It was all guesswork. "They could have bored a hole in my body. I thanked God it was just the right spot," she says.

It was around 3 a.m. of July 18 when she finally got out—almost 36 hours after the earthquake struck and she was trapped in the rubble.

"I did not fit in the first hole," she recalls. "There was a glimmer of light from the rescuers. They also gave us water to sip slowly. And then they asked me to drop myself head first."

Of the 60 people who attended the USAID conference, 34 were inside the building, but only around 10 were able to make it alive, Sonia estimates. Her sister-in-law was not among them.

No wounds, injuries

"The last time I heard her, she told me she was having a hard time breathing. I begged whoever it was near her to fan her. And then she fell silent. I thought she just fell asleep," Sonia says.

The moment Sonia got out of the rubble, she was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance.

"But I came out unscathed," she says. There were no wounds, no injuries, only a black and blue spot on her leg that appeared from tapping her feet on the table.

"My husband and I proceeded to Manila on a chopper. He was sleeping the whole trip because he was more tired," she laughingly remembers.

"I was the one who was awake, looking down, realizing the extent of the damages. I did not think it was so bad!"

When she saw the buildings that crumbled, "I thanked God for a new life. I was literally born again, coming out of the womb of the earth."

The earthquake also damaged 88,000 homes and displaced 796,131 people. It left a 125-km rupture in the ground that stretches from Dingalan, Aurora to Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

New life

Celebrating a new life for Sonia meant a lot of things. For one, it was pursuing environmental projects.

"I made it a personal pledge to get involved in environmental causes," she says. Among the major projects was the Galinlupa Awards, a body that gives recognition to schools pushing for sustainable development in their areas and enhancing the environment. The awards were sponsored by the Senate Spouses Foundation Inc.

The experience has also strengthened her in her work at the St. Michael's Hospice, where she helps out in preparing poor cancer patients to face death, and their families to cope with the imminent loss of their loved ones.

"It is not easy. It takes a multidisciplinary approach to do that," she reveals. "And my experience counts."

She also admits to having a deeper spiritual relationship with God. In fact, she was part of the recent St. Ezekiel Moreno's pilgrimage and healing caravan spearheaded by the Augustinian Recollects.

"We went to 35 cities where we had healing Masses, visited priests and bishops and talked to people about God," she says.

Husband's death

Her brush with death also made it easy for her to accept the death of her husband, then presidential candidate Raul Roco. "I was even his 'caregiver' or 'heart giver' as I say," she says.

Now, Sonia says she is busy preparing for the first death anniversary of her husband on Aug. 5. "I am arranging the memorabilia for the library of Naga, now named after my husband. The day of his death will also officially be Raul Roco Day in Naga."

On the 16th anniversary of the killer earthquake, Sonia says she would take time out to reflect on her borrowed life.

"Since then, I have been celebrating two birthdays: my biological birthday and the day I was saved. So I'm turning 16," she says, laughingly.

Asked about the greatest lesson she has learned from the temblor, she did not mince words: "Life is precious and sacred. Don't take it for granted. One should appreciate life as a gift from God, and you don't have to wait for an earthquake to realize that."

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Pimentel seeks shorter jail terms for student-convicts

By Philip C. Tubeza

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO Pimentel Jr. has filed a bill allowing prisoners to have their jail sentence shortened if they enroll in schools while in prison.

Pimentel said he filed Senate Bill 2022 to encourage convicted offenders to take advantage of educational opportunities, help enhance their sense of self-respect and dignity, and decongest the country's overcrowded prisons.

"The proposal unequivocally recognizes as 'good conduct' the demonstrated courage, willingness and ability of a prisoner to increase his knowledge, develop his skills and strengthen his moral values while under detention," Pimentel said in a statement.

Under the bill, any prisoner who will take up a post-graduate, college, vocational skills or value development course, high school or elementary school within the prison system would be "granted good conduct time credit towards the service of his sentence."

The time credit shall not exceed 15 days for every month of study time, Pimentel said.

He said the bill also provides that prisoners who volunteer to teach in the special academic and vocational classes for fellow inmates will receive good conduct time credit equivalent up to 15 days for every month of teaching duties.

"Increasing the literacy and skills standards and strengthening the moral values of prisoners will facilitate their reintegration into the mainstream of society as reformed and productive citizens," Pimentel said.

With the increasing literacy among prisoners, a jail management system responsive to current needs and problems can be implemented to forestall jailbreaks, riots and other destabilizing activities, he added.

Moreover, Pimentel said this will enable the state to "fulfill its duty to provide elementary and high school education to its citizens for free."

"It is a fact that many prisoners are unschooled or illiterates which may be contributory to their transgression of the law," he said.

"Ignorance costs more than education, and no better proof of this could be found than in jails where tangible returns on time and monetary investments are wanting," he added.

Pimentel said the grant of the good conduct time allowance to inmates was made mandatory to serve "as an incentive commensurate to the rigors and the bliss of increasing knowledge, developing skills and strengthening moral values while under detention."

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'Enterprise in crisis'

EDITORIAL

WITH HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS in the national public school system, the Department of Education is the largest bureaucracy in the country. That is both its strength and its weakness.

The weakness becomes particularly apparent whenever politics rears its less-than-beatific head in education matters: when overworked, underpaid teachers are forced to carry the burden of the election process every three years, or when a politician is appointed secretary of education.

The appointment of Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus as the new DepEd chief thus comes with the usual questions about political wheeling and dealing. The same suspicions welcomed President Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of Sen. Raul Roco in 2001, and Rep. Florencio Abad in 2004.

It is a good thing that Lapus, a businessman-turned-three-term-congressman, is practiced at the arts of engagement. When members of a union of DepEd employees staged street protests against his appointment, Lapus suavely asked them to a meeting. "I understand that all secretaries have experienced this kind of attitude," he said, before saying he wanted to sit down with the protesters.

But there is no gainsaying the obvious. With elections less than a year away, Lapus' first hurdle is decidedly political: the perception that his job is merely to warm the secretary's seat, until next year's elections. To be sure, he has addressed himself directly to that concern: "I wouldn't have accepted the post if it was only for a year. What can you do in a year?" (Would that other candidates or nominees for crucial public offices, such as the top posts in both the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police, enjoy the same consideration.)

His second hurdle is philosophical: How does he define the work that confronts him in education?

Because of his particular business experience, the secretary-designate sees himself as a manager; more precisely, as a **crisis** manager. There is something to be said for that, because the education sector in the Philippines is in fact in crisis.

"The first step in leading an enterprise out of a crisis is to address the human component," Lapus told the INQUIRER last week, "relieving it of excess baggage, myths and misconceptions, breaking molds and then rewarding for productivity and efficiency."

We can forgive the management jargon, if Lapus (as businessmen also like to say) knows how to walk the talk. If we understand him correctly, what he is saying is that his first step would be to transform the department's culture from one that is still largely government-bound to one that embraces the highest standards and best practices of the private sector.

And he aims to start at the top. "Developing the managerial skills and capabilities of those who are in charge of the schools is an important factor in achieving better quality education as they are the ones on the ground. What we want to see is a quality standard present in all the schools."

He also has teacher capability-upgrading in mind. "The quality of classroom education is determined by teacher quality. Much of this has to do with matching and getting the right educators with the right majors."

These two overriding objectives—turning school administrators into managers, empowering teachers—are basic stuff, the real ABCs of education, but in the country's political context, they are hardly motherhood statements. We can already anticipate protests (perhaps by department employees, certainly by militant students) against the very use of private-sector templates as organizational models.

What gives us cautious reason to hope, however, is Lapus' third objective: To generate more funds for the education sector.

The "aim by 2007," Lapus said, "is for the DepEd to get what it is due" from the General Appropriations Act. This means an annual increase in the budget much greater than the P2 billion the department will receive this year—perhaps to as much as P12 billion next year. We expect Lapus to apply the lessons he learned as chief executive of the Land Bank once, and as outgoing chair of the House ways and means committee, to the department's budget fight.

That would really be learning from experience.

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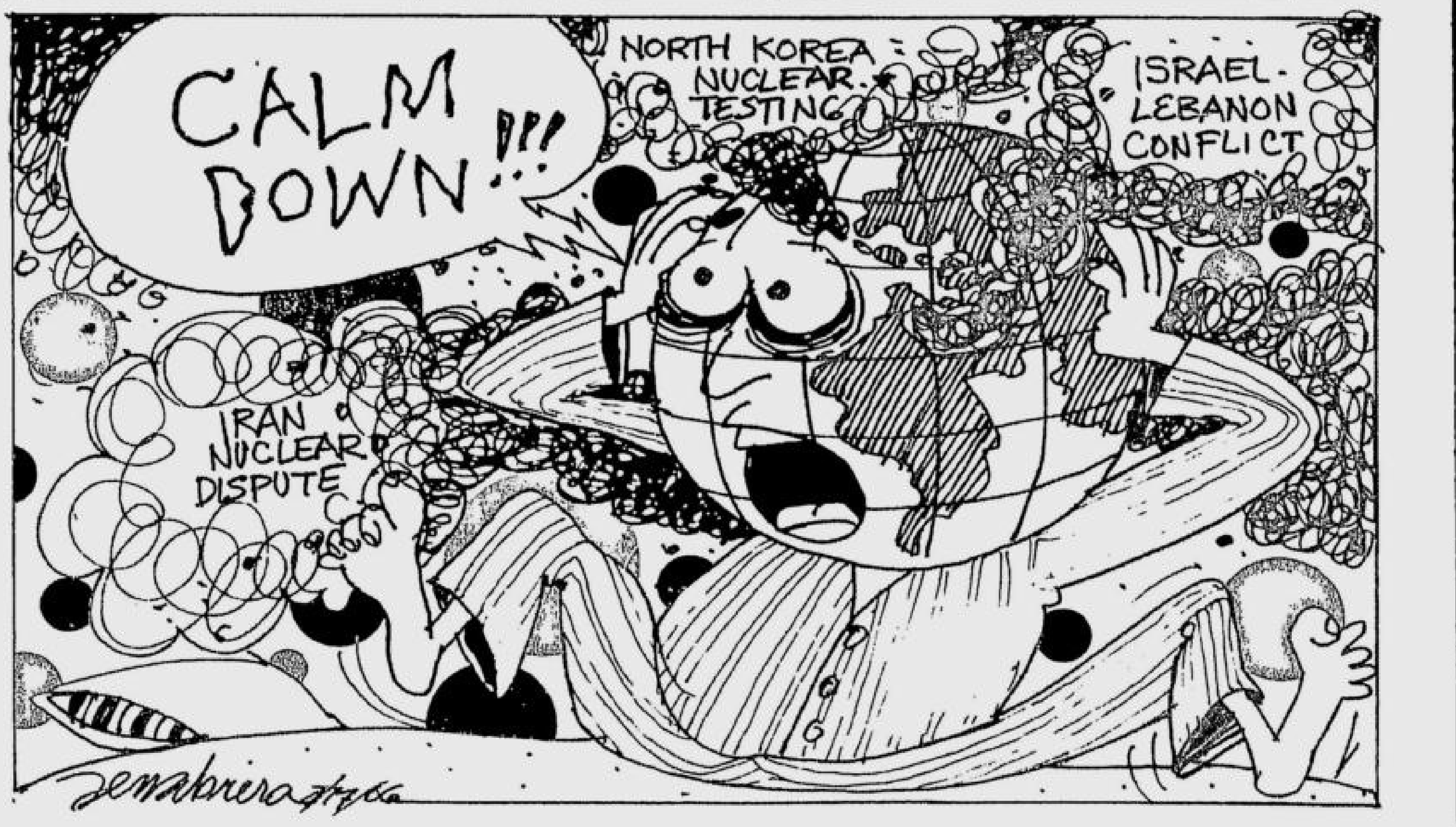

Reyes puts Bulacan governor in her place

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE LATEST BATTLE OF BIAK NA BATO IS over. Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes ended it by stopping all marble quarry operations at the site of the national park in the municipalities of Doña Remedios Trinidad and San Miguel in Bulacan.

There is some sort of a "gold rush" for miners there, except that they are not mining for gold but for the rare—and therefore very expensive—tea rose marble. It is the curse of Biak na Bato that instead of being made up of ordinary rock, the entire hill is made up of this unique marble that is much in demand in the international market.

Only one operator has a legal quarry license and a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) with the government, but those were canceled by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 1986. The court case involving this cancellation is still pending with the Supreme Court.

There are many small-scale miners operating at the site, however; and they are poaching on the mineral reservation of the one legal license holder, Rosemoor Mining and Development Corp. (RMDC). It seems Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz has made her office another DENR by issuing small-scale quarry permits to her friends.

The events that led to the sudden cessation of quarry operations at Biak na Bato has an ironic, even humorous, twist.

Presenting herself as an environmentalist, the governor waged a high-profile campaign against Rosemoor. She denounced the quarrying of tea rose marble at Biak na Bato as destructive to the environment. Her purpose was to have Rosemoor's quarry rights to Biak na Bato canceled by the DENR so that her own allies could take over. In doing so, however, she locked horns with the DENR's Reyes, whom she tried to pressure into canceling Rosemoor's quarrying rights. She even caused the installation of a giant billboard at the grounds of the Bulacan provincial capitol, recording the number of days that Reyes had let pass without a decision on the quarrying at Biak na Bato. She bit more than she could chew.

Last July 12, Reyes did make a decision—and it shocked De la Cruz. Reyes did suspend the quarrying operations of Rosemoor, as she had urged, but also stopped all quarrying by her friends. Reyes canceled all the small-scale mining permits the office of De la Cruz had issued to quarry operators. They constitute usurpation of authority reserved solely for the DENR, Reyes said in his decision.

De la Cruz's drumbeaters have been trying to put a positive spin to the DENR decision. "Reyes blinked," they said, due to the pressure she has been exerting. Hogwash! Reyes' ruling put De la Cruz in her place.

Now she is not only facing plunder charges filed by Rosemoor but also the prospect of being charged, together with other Bulacan provincial officials, with usurpation of authority for issuing permits only the DENR is authorized by law to issue.

Rosemoor's license was suspended for deficiencies in the payment of excise taxes, occupation fees and royalties; likewise, for failure to put up measures to prevent air and water pollution; and for failure to present an Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program. The DENR said the operations of Rosemoor would remain suspended until it shall have complied with all the proper housekeeping rules promulgated by the department.

Reyes also ordered the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTAF), led by Undersecretary Roy Kyamko, to coordinate with the Philippine National Police to ensure full implementation of the DENR order.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) was instructed to immediately make a comprehensive hydrological assessment of the entire area to determine the impact of the quarry operations on the surrounding water bodies.

May I suggest that the Department of Tourism be also called in to develop and promote this historic site into a tourist spot. Cancel all quarry permits at the site permanently, and restore the original boundaries of the Biak na Bato National Park, as proclaimed by President Manuel L. Quezon in 1937. Where it is now, the tea rose marble is more valuable than all the money that can be earned from selling it. You cannot put any price on patrimony.

* * *

If Malacañang factotums could dare try to bribe bishops (who have taken a vow of poverty), imagine what they could do and have been doing to people who are more materialistic and are more susceptible to earthly temptations. No amount of denial by Malacañang's mouthpieces could make the people believe that there was no such bribery attempt. What? Are they saying that the bishops are liars?

In truth, the policy of this administration is: Every man has his price. That is how Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her minions have been able to hide the truth, evade impeachment, cling to power and usurp position and power—by bribery. Because they have been largely successful in this enterprise, they now have the courage to try it on the men of the cloth. Imagine, Palace officials trying to bribe holy men whose only desire is to fight evil and follow the teachings of Christ. What will they try next?

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: A married couple in their 60s are visited by a fairy who, as a reward for their long marriage, granted them both a wish each.

"I want to travel around the world with my darling husband," says the wife. Two tickets for a round-the-world luxury cruise appear in her hand.

"I'm sorry, honey," says the husband, "but my wish is to have a wife 30 years younger than me."

The fairy waved her wand, and the man became 92 years old.

Moral of the story: Men who are ungrateful bastards should remember that fairies are females.

More bishoprics

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THAT WAS A MIND-BOGGLING STATEMENT Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said last week to justify the decision of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines not to back the impeachment bid against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. "*Talaga naman nandaya, e. Pero kahit nandaya, maliwanag naman na si Presidente ang nanalo. Hindi siguro* one million (votes) *pero siguro mga ilang* hundred thousand." ("Of course, GMA cheated. But even if she cheated, clearly she won the elections. Perhaps not by one million votes but by several hundred thousand.")

Arguelles amplified on that point: "*Lahat naman nandaya, e. Natalo lang 'yung iba sa dayaan*." ("Everyone cheated anyway. Some people just lost in the cheating.")

Now if the two prosperous congressmen, Prospero Pichay and Prospero Nograles, had said that (and they have), I'd have chalked it up to their normal twisted thinking. But for an archbishop to mouth it, well, I did say before the faithful in this country was one lost flock being led by wayward shepherds. And they wonder why the faithful has become faithless.

What's wrong with the statement is—everything. It betrays every canon of God and man.

At the very least, the notion that GMA won anyway even if she cheated is debatable. The "losers" have evidence to prove otherwise. They are simply being prevented from proving it. In the absence of a fair hearing—indeed given that Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan are being court-martialed rather than given medals for wanting to tell the world what they know—how can anyone, let alone an archbishop, rule that "even if GMA cheated, clearly she won the elections"?

But that is nothing. In fact the only thing that is clear is that the bishops believe GMA cheated in the elections. Arguelles admits so. Now how on earth can anyone who has cheated in the elections possibly claim the highest position of the land by any law of God or man? Arguelles suggests that GMA would have won anyway even if she did not cheat. But my dear archbishop, if you are a teacher and you catch a student blatantly copying her classmate's answers, what would you do—flunk her outright, or graduate her summa cum laude on the ground that she could have passed anyway even if she did not cheat? Surprisingly, the person who first raised this argument was a professor. You have professors and archbishops, the embodiments of reason and moral rectitude, arguing this way, heaven help us.

Arguelles argues further that everyone cheated anyway. Well, that is even more debatable. That GMA cheated is a fact; that everybody else did is a conjecture. Even the bishops agree to the first—"*talaga naman nandaya, e.*" Not everyone agrees to the second.

Indeed, even if you grant that everybody else cheated—and that takes blind faith to grant—at the very least there's cheating and there's cheating. Listen to the "Hello Garci" tape again and see if there is anything to compare to it. See if any past President of this country became so by personally, brazenly and repeatedly calling up a Comelec commissioner during the counting, demanding that she win by a million votes over her nearest rival whatever the cost, including kidnapping a public school teacher to prevent her from talking about the ballot-switching in her small and impoverished community.

At the very most, you grant that everybody else cheated, why, on earth or hell, should your conclusion be, sorry *na lang* for the people who lost in the cheating? What idiocy is that? If you are a professor and you catch your whole class cheating, do you reward the best, or worst, or most relentless cheater, or do you rail at the outrage, void the results and give a new exam with relentless monitoring to see that cheating doesn't happen again? You are God's representative on earth and you catch the candidates cheating in national elections, do you uphold the best, or worst, or most relentless cheater, or do you fulminate at the obscenity and demand that new elections be held with people who know how to count the results? Why should the bishops' conclusion from the premise that everyone cheated be: "*Sige*, Gloria *na lang*, she leaves P15,000 in our vestry anyway." (How cheap.) Why not: "Let's have snap elections?"

What the hell has happened to us as a people? I mean, it's not as if we're talking about the position of *kubrador* for a bookie operation, we're talking about the presidency. That position is sacred. How in God's name—and I do not take his name in vain—can an archbishop, a symbol of moral rectitude, possibly say that he believes GMA cheated in the elections but she deserves to occupy that position anyway? What kind of governance can you expect from someone you yourself certify as a crook? Indeed, not just an ordinary crook who steals money, but a crook of crooks, who steals votes?

Not too long ago, this country defined "president" as the embodiment of the ideal Filipino, the repository of its cherished values. Today, this country defines president simply as someone it cannot prove to be a criminal. Not too long ago, this country expected a president to show exemplary behavior, or be transparent about it. Today, this country expects a president to do everything in her power to prevent others from showing she is a criminal. Not too long ago, this country expected its moral guardians to guard its morals. Today, this country expects its moral guardians to guard their hoard.

This isn't just settling for crumbs, this is settling for s—t. Even beggars can be choosers and will run after hooligans who throw s—t rather than coins in their alms box. But hooligans throw s—t in our alms box, and we say, "Well, it's not toxic."

One is tempted to say this country has gone to the dogs. But it's worse. It's gone to the bishops.

The North Korean missiles

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO, IN 2002, THE BUSH administration accused North Korea of secretly developing a program to enrich uranium to weapons grade. It claimed that this was in violation of the 1994 agreement, which Pyongyang had signed with Washington, to freeze the former's pursuit of nuclear weapons. As a consequence, the Bush administration declared that the United States was no longer bound by the terms of the agreement. Thus, the United States and its allies suspended the oil shipments they had been providing North Korea under that agreement.

In retaliation, Pyongyang expelled the international inspectors and resumed the reprocessing of plutonium.

It was never clear, however, that North Korea was engaged in weapons-grade uranium enrichment and not merely doing lower level enrichment for peaceful purposes. The assessment of experts seems to be that the Bush administration had exaggerated its findings.

Two years later, in 2004, the United States proposed a new agreement which would have also involved China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and North Korea. But the United States laid down, as precondition, that North Korea must not only admit that uranium enrichment was in process but also specify where it was taking place! Naturally this did not please North Korea and the negotiations never got started.

It turned out, however, that the United States may have been right after all. Recently North Korea fired a number of test missiles. It started with the launch of at least five short-range missiles and one long-range missile, followed one day later with the firing of a seventh missile. The seventh was a long-range Taepodong-2 missile which, however, fizzled out 42 seconds after liftoff. As President Bush put it, "It tumbled into the sea." Or, as one administration official put it, "What do we have here? Six missiles based on World War II technology and one longer range missile that flew for 42 seconds." But the US missile defense system has been put on alert with orders to shoot down what might threaten American soil.

It should be noted that the shorter range missiles did not fail. However, they were "a mix of short-range Scud missiles and moderate-range Rodong missiles." Similar range missiles are being fired by Israel in its current conflict with Lebanon. What North Korea launched, therefore, had the capability of reaching South Korea and Japan. They were enough to alarm neighbors and put the two countries on notice.

It is not known what the successful missiles and the failed Taepodong-2 carried. But we know that short-range missiles can cause havoc as they are now causing havoc in Lebanon. Moreover, the launch itself may be an indication that North Korea hopes to develop missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

But how realistic is that? What is the technology situation in North Korea as far as nuclear arms development is concerned? I would assume that Iran, a country with more resources, is ahead of North Korea on this matter. In the current impasse with Iran, however, an assessment of Iran's capability goes this way: "Despite the inconclusiveness of the I.A.E.A. [International Atomic Energy Agency] assessment, its detailed access since December 2003 has provided the basis for some strong presumptions about Iran's technical capacities. The inspection record clearly indicates that Iran is not yet capable of producing nuclear explosive isotopes in sufficient amounts to fabricate nuclear weapons. It is always possible to imagine more advanced capabilities hidden from inspection, and it is difficult to prove conclusively that they do not exist. As a practical matter, however, it is reasonable to assume that Iran would have to undertake several years of unimpeded effort to produce enough material for a single nuclear weapon; and during that time, the facilities in question would be exposed to observation and potential attack." What North Korea has cannot be more than Iran's.

At least two questions are now being discussed. First, why did North Korea do it? Second, what should be the response to it?

Considering the character of North Korean leadership, it may easily be guessed that the leadership is looking for something that can be a symbol of national pride, which can distract the populace from the impoverishment it has been suffering. That a nuclear program can be a symbol of national pride is true of India and Pakistan; and North Korea has greater incentive to look for successes that can distract its people from their plight. The North Korean leadership is just the type that would be inclined to think along these lines.

There can also be the belief, of course, that possession of nuclear weapons confers a deterrent effect. Presumably North Korea, threatened as it is not only by neighbors but also by distant United States, must be attracted by this argument. But North Korea must also know that this could be a deception. It is difficult to imagine how North Korea can deploy nuclear weapons that are useful for retaliation without opening itself to preemptive destruction by superior forces like the United States, especially under an adventurist president like Bush.

At this stage, a military response does not seem to be justifiable; neither is nuclear conflagration imminent. But before things get worse, Asian and world leaders should think what incentives or compromises can ensure that nuclear conflagration will not happen in this part of the world.

The secret identity of Ferdinand Marcos (3)

(Concluded from June 26)

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

THE DOCUMENTS SENT TO ME BY EXPRESS mail in October and November of 2001 are not about Ferdinand Marcos, although he is a key figure in the incredible parade of dramatis personae in this beautiful, mystifying story that spans millenniums. The documents—or the story they tell—are about what and who we really were and what we can become.

Some have seen glimpses of this story according to, as the Holy Koran says, their "level of understanding." They saw it according to their perspective and their own time. There was our local historian, the late Yusop Tan, former mayor of Jolo, mentor of my early years, a man who had my highest esteem; there was my first boss, the late Sulu Gov. Murphy Sangkula, who started me on the wonderful by-road of unconventional historical research; there was my high school literature teacher, Department of Education assistant regional director Dr. Jawali Laja, who showed me what to look for and how to find it. And there is former MNLF chair Nur Misuari, who wanted to make it a reality, if not entirely, at least in part.

But none, I think, saw it in its totality as President Marcos did.

Only after 30 years did it all make sense to me: the much-ballyhooed "Kasaysayan ng Lahi"; the renaming of the Philippines as "Maharlika"; the creation of agencies where writers, researchers and artists found their places; the expensive publications filled with stories, articles and art reproductions about our past and the people who lived it.

Even Imelda Marcos, with her so-called "edifice complex," made sense. No matter how much you revile her for her alleged indulgences and frivolities, the fact remains that she gave us the Cultural Center of the Philippines—among many other "projects" and programs that she personally handled almost obsessively—which has become the venue for the revival of the *zarzuela* and many other stage presentations that are the speaking, singing, dancing portraits of the Filipino, expressing the Filipino soul.

All these were part of the vision that was expressed in that much-ridiculed cry "This nation can be great again!" Maybe, except for a few, we simply could not see what Marcos saw: We were a great nation.

This is the history—better still, the story—that Marcos wanted to tell.

And these documents are a very important piece in this overwhelmingly glorious tapestry that could have shown us—in all its splendor—that we were not meant to be a nation of exported domestic helpers and laborers; or to be "sub-humans" living in squalor under bridges, or scrounging garbage dumps for food, hopelessly wallowing in the misery of our daily lives.

We do not deserve the degradation that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has led us into, as if we were commodities to sell in the world market and collaterals for unbridled indebtedness.

Because once upon a time there was a kingdom called Maharlika, whose founder, an Arab from Mecca, Arabia, traced his origins to Toledo, Spain. He set up governance in Buansa, in the island of Jolo, in 1108 A.D., by virtue of a land title issued by the Spanish monarchy covering the entire area of what is now the Philippines, including North Borneo and the Spratlys, with reserve funds in gold that would amount to about $100 billion today.

The validity of Original Certificate of Title 01-1, ratified by the Royal Decree in 1864, was confirmed by the Supreme Court, and the deeds of absolute sale were duly recorded in the Register of Deeds. Among the recorded sales covered 3,000 hectares in Bulacan and 500 hectares in Tagaytay for the amount of P3.5 million, in favor of Don Emilio Ejercito and spouse Doña Mary Marcelo Ejercito. The sale was made on April 19, 1938, when one centavo could buy you a glass of *sorbetes*! There was also one engineer, named Ramon Magsaysay, who bought 700 hectares, also in Tagaytay, for P1.4 million on June 7 of the same year.

Only now did I realize that my "conversation" with President Marcos 30 years ago—it actually took place only in seconds—was not accidental. I distinctly recall that he asked those questions in rapid succession, not waiting for my answers. He simply wanted to set the "guideposts" and to confirm the situation. Only now did that short cryptic note I received later make sense, real sense.

Which was why it was very important for me to know—for my own satisfaction, regardless of popular perception—whether Marcos deserved landing in the book of world records as a "kleptocrat," a term invented precisely to describe him because there was no existing word in the English dictionary to fully describe the magnitude of his alleged theft.

It was not enough for me to know that he did not order the massacre of Tausug and Samal youth on Corregidor island in the Jabidah training camp; that he did not order the massacre of hundreds of Tausugs on the island of Pata and many other atrocities committed by his military against my people—atrocities for which he was held responsible as commander in chief.

Stealing, however, would be his own act (for which he alone would be responsible).

Because no other president had done more for the Muslims in this country. The legislation of Muslim holidays. The Shari'ah courts. Maharlika Village. The "unassembled" civil service eligibility. Mosques and "impact projects" all over Mindanao. The Golden Mosque built right beside the most prominent Roman Catholic church. The list is long.

And because of a secret, which I have had to bear, sometimes in anguish and shame; a secret that Ferdinand Marcos entrusted to me under a journalist's vow of confidentiality—his secret identity: "I am a Muslim like you."

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Prima donna monologues

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THEY SAY MARIA CALLAS, THE FAMOUS AND controversial soprano, attended the wedding of her long-time lover (their affair lasted nine years) Aristotle Onassis, the fantastically rich and exceedingly coarse Greek shipping tycoon, to Jacqueline Kennedy, widow of the American president. Callas endured the entire ceremony with great stoicism, never betraying emotion. But as she left the ceremony, before she could board her car, her self-control gave way to violent, grief-stricken emotion. That moment was immortalized by a photographer who happened to be around.

Callas, called "*la divina*" by her fans, died a heartbroken recluse in 1977. Her voice continues to inspire passionate debate among them. (Was her voice purer prior to her losing weight in 1954? Was her voice more expressive after that, though doomed to the deterioration that spelled a premature end to her performing career?) But in 1995, a play, titled "Master Class," appeared, written by Terence McNally. The play is set in New York, where Callas gave a series of classes from October 1971 to March 1972.

A diva past her prime, used to the limelight but who knew center stage was no longer hers; a fiercely ambitious woman who had to see, in every student's face, a desire to eclipse her own fame; an artist devoted to her craft, enamored not only by music, but with poetry and emotion; a person engaged in constant struggle to "un-self-consciously," even clinically, observe self and others; the motivations (ranging from the noble to the selfish) of artists and the hostility they sometimes feel for the audience, upon whose energy they depend—all these are reflected (and reflected upon) by the character of Callas in the play.

The Philippine Opera Company has managed to stage "Master Class" in what can only be described as a masterful manner. To play a diva—and a role engaged in monologues that could come across as Imeldific (if in the hands of the wrong actresses), overly flippant and delusional; or that could reduce the performance to the embittered rantings of a megalomaniac who's seen better days—is no mean feat. That the actress playing Callas does so—not only with the expected bravura, but also with molto panache, bravissimo forays of wit and accompanied by a cast that does its share of bravissimo singing (indeed, what would a performance about opera be, without the actual music and singing?): all these come together, on a Spartan stage, to make for an engaging performance.

Playwright Terence McNally, it seems, is a passionate Callas fan, but the Callas of his play is an internalized one, an adapted one, who uses the details of a real life to speak not just about opera, but also about artists and artistry in the broadest sense. Naturally the viewer, given such a vivid interpretation of the innermost (and so, really, undiscoverable) recesses of a performer's heart and mind, gravitates to those lines that speak to the personal experiences of the viewer.

One such scene, for me, is when Callas speaks of the obsession with technique and learning it—an obsession that forces artists to set aside what they enjoy, for what they need. Speaking of her student days, she recalls, "I had a pencil!" And she says it with the fierce pride of an officer talking of his sword. She recounts that what she would have wanted to have, during the days of her youthful deprivation in an Athens occupied by the Germans, were oranges; but the aspiring opera singer needs a pencil to make notations—for future reference on the music sheet—so that the luxuries one craves, such as oranges, will come only after the period of preparation.

Through the character of a long-dead singer, the playwright thus pens songs of his own. The singer in the play is like the writer of the play—both waging war and engaging in courtship with the reader and the listener: "We bare our souls," Callas says, "and all they say, is 'huh?'" What artist—writer, composer, singer, musician, painter, actor—hasn't felt that frustration? Only to temper such feelings with even more intense feelings triggered by the realization that the artist lives for two different things: the fulfillment of that unstoppable urge to create; and the limitless desire to have one's creations recognized by an audience.

* * *

The Tony Award-winning "Master Class" will be staged by the Philippine Opera Company at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater (RCBC Plaza) from July 19-22. For tickets and inquiries about schedules, call 895-8097.

* * *

In response to my column last week, in which I presented the views of Jojo Malig, I received several e-mail from Vicente C. de Jesus. He asserts that the views presented by Malig were really his own, and catalogues the online mailing lists in which he presented them beginning April 27, 2005 (Malig's blog entry on the subject came out in May of that year). He also says he presented a paper before the Society for the History of Discoveries at the US Library of Congress on Oct. 13, 2000. I hope Malig and De Jesus, who have the same advocacy, can sort out their contending views on the originality of Malig's writings.

* * *

Tomorrow on "The Explainer," which airs on ANC from 6 to 7 p.m., my topic will be the State of the Nation Address (Sona): how it became established as an important ceremony of state, how Sonas are put together, and how people inquire as to their meaning and importance. My guests will be Jonathan Malaya, co-author of "So Help Us God..." (the definitive book on presidential speeches), who will discuss how a Sona is written; and the INQUIRER's very own senior editor John Nery, who will tackle not just the rhetoric, but the substance of such speeches, and how to go about separating their substance from the rhetoric. Questions and comments on the show are welcome at www.quezon.ph.

An open letter to Secretary Lapus

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran Apostol

DEAR SECRETARY LAPUS,

Congratulations—or should it be "Our deepest sympathies"—to you for taking on the most difficult Cabinet assignment.

Our Foundation for Worldwide People Power is dedicated to making people remember the role of citizens in bringing this country to greatness—after Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada. Our advocacy is called Education Revolution because it aims to spur a community-driven national movement for quality education for all school-age Filipinos in all our public schools.

Our efforts started when De La Salle University's Bro. Andrew Gonzalez was just about to leave the office you are holding now. However, before he left, Brother Andrew took the time to enlighten us on RA 8525, more popularly known as the Adopt-A-School Act. This law was passed in 1998, through the sponsorship of Rep. Anne Marie Periquet in the House and by the late Sen. Marcelo Fernan and Sen. Juan Flavier in the Senate.

The late Brother Andrew told me back then that RA 8525 provides for a tax incentive equivalent to 150 percent of the value of the assistance given by a private entity directly to a public school. He added that he had made Adopt-A-School a flagship project of the Department of Education. To this end, he established the office of the Adopt-A-School Secretariat, which today is headed by the affable Director Aurora Felizardo.

The late Secretary Raul Roco—a very close, personal friend of mine and a staunch supporter of the FWWPP's Education Revolution—however, pointed out that while RA 8525 paved the way for more private sector support for public education, there were no corresponding implementing rules from the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Hence there was no way that any private entity could avail of the incentives provided for by the Adopt-A-School law.

Secretary Edilberto de Jesus, a former FWWPP trustee, succeeded Secretary Roco. He was responsible for outlining the "Road Map for Education" that guides the FWWPP's Education Revolution to this day. He also successfully secured the promulgation of BIR IRR 10-2003, which establishes the rules for implementing the pertinent incentive provisions of RA 8525.

More recently, we had the chance to sit down with Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo and discuss with her our Community Action Program, which is powered by a performance-based private sector support framework. Through this program, we aim to get communities to make public education high on their list of priorities. The performance-based private sector support framework facilitates community involvement by providing both the tools and the focus for running a sustained quality education initiative.

Undersecretary Hidalgo has been our keynote speaker—on more than one occasion—for the Mentoring the Mentors sessions we have been conducting for the different DepEd regions and divisions all over the country. She has found our Mentoring the Mentors Program to be holistic and comprehensive. We are honored that she continues to speak well of this unique teacher-formation and capacity-building activity.

Mr. Secretary, you can already tell at this point that the Education Revolution advocacy runs on two legs: the Community Action Program and Mentoring the Mentors Program. We are deeply encouraged to learn that you consider school-based management as a keystone in your plans for the qualitative improvement of our public education system.

Our two programs both aim to highlight the interrelationship between the school and the community it serves. We understand that this is a key principle in school-based management. Painful experience has shown that both the school and the community around it can survive though alienated from each other. However, quality education will surely flourish if both find relevance in and draw strength from each other.

You also said that you felt that the DepEd is an "enterprise in crisis." We believe that the DepEd is more than just an enterprise. It is the embodiment of the State's commitment to uphold quality education as a basic human right.

What does quality education really mean for us? How can we tell if a school and its faculty adequately meet the learning needs of our children? Academic experts and social scientists have long been mired in debate on this issue. However, these brilliant minds have ascertained that there are two key elements that characterize quality education.

One of them is called "cognitive development," or—in more simple terms—learning progress. Remember how proud you felt the day your grade-schooler came home from school and started reading from his textbook? That's an indicator of your child's cognitive development. How well a school and its teachers succeed in this regard is a direct indicator of their quality from the standpoint of the community.

The second element is "emotional and creative development." Does the school consistently impart positive social and cultural values to its pupils and students?

This reminds me of my encounter with the first Grade 6 graduating class from the FWWPP's adopted elementary school in Sitio Talaga in Morong, Rizal. In the midst of humble surroundings, I could never forget the words the 10 boys and 10 girls had sworn on their graduation day.

1. Always remember what God has commanded and obey Him at all times.
2. Serve our Motherland, with our lives if need be. Love and honor our parents all our lives.
3. Take good care of our health, and make our souls shine with bright thoughts.
4. Lead our lives with dignity and honor, by the grace of God.

As you can see, the parents and teachers at Sitio Talaga did what they could to introduce values like respect for the rights of others, good citizenship, dignity and honor, to the schoolchildren in their own community.

As parents and responsible adults—degree of wealth or poverty notwithstanding—our assessment of the quality of education in a particular school informs our decision to keep sending our children there.

Mr. Secretary, you have your work cut out for you. We are certain that you realize, even at this early stage, that this Cabinet post is more than just a job. We pledge all the help we can muster to make your work easier—and more relevant to the learning needs of the present and future generations of Filipinos.

Eugenia Duran Apostol is the board chair of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power. You may send e-mail to edapostol@fwwpp.org.

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RP's No. 1 promoter of war

IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT fighting between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and government troops, 4,000 families or 20,000 individuals have been forcibly displaced from their homes. They are now languishing in unsanitary and cramped makeshift evacuation centers.

Once again, life is gripped with fear and anger in Maguindanao, the center of the current hostilities between the government and the MILF. School operations have been halted. Economic activities are on hold. And the people are hungry, angry and anxious. Is there no end to the unjust war that destroys our homes, families and lives? The peoples' woes cannot be summed up in words. But the massive scale of destruction that state-led or military-exacerbated wars have caused in recent years cannot be denied or hidden.

An average Mindanaoan family living in the provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and other Moro-dominated provinces, such as Zamboanga, General Santps, North Cotabato, South Cotobato and Sarangani, would have been displaced five to six times in a span of five years.

Also, during the three most devastating wars under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's regime, around 600,000 people have been forcibly displaced—nearly 80,000 in the 2005 wars in Sulu; 450,000 in the 2003 war in Northern and Central Mindanao; and around 80,000 in the 2001 state of lawlessness in Basilan. (The figures are based on the Department of Social Welfare and Development's records).

The recent surge of violence gives the people no reason to believe the Arroyo administration's assurances that the GRP-MILF peace talks are indeed "moving on." The derailment of the peace negotiations, even in the past, was always caused by a breach of confidence. With this backdrop, crucial questions arise: Is the current war in Maguindanao a deliberate attempt to disrupt the GRP-MILF peace talks? Why did the government not give a "response of trust" to the MILF's vehement denial of responsibility to the June bombing; instead, the government responded with military might?

The hostilities cast doubt on the Arroyo administration's sincerity to pursue peace in Mindanao. The vicious cycle of war that the Arroyo administration engages in frustrates the Moro people's aspiration for a life that is free from the shackles of state-perpetrated violence, for a kind of peace that is based on justice and democracy.

It appears now that this dream will find no realization in the Arroyo regime. The Filipino people will be better off without Ms Arroyo's war. Hence, we must gather our strength and unite against the No. 1 promoter of unjust wars in Mindanao and in the whole country.

—REN JALALUDDIN ROPETA,
vice chair, Moro-Christian
Peoples' Alliance (MCPA,)
Barangay Pinyahan,
Diliman, Quezon City

Mix of greedy 'trapos' and irresponsible media

THE POLITICAL TURMOIL PLAGUING our country today does not only worsen the state of our ailing economy. It also puts in the limelight the "insatiable," selfish traditional politicians (*trapos*) and irresponsible media.

Consumed by their greed for wealth and power, as well as with their obsession with media exposure, the *trapos* indulge in negative politics, using all the dirty tricks they can muster to pursue their selfish ends. In so doing, they expose their vicious characters.

On the other hand, the media—print, television and radio—"feast" on these politicians' gimmicks. It can't be denied that media prefer news stories that are negative more than the positive ones as the former attract a larger clientele. Of course, to justify this, the Fourth Estate will invoke press freedom and say its primary concern is to inform the public; and that profit is only secondary.

The *trapos* and the majority of our media go about with their "usual business" with no qualms whatsoever about the outcome of their actions. What they are doing is a great disservice to our nation. They are plunging it deeper into the quagmire of divisiveness, confusion and regression.

Unless the *trapos* change for the better, our nation is doomed to perdition.

Quo vadis, Philippines?

—VIC J. COLUMNA,
vicjcolumna@yahoo.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

De Quiros on GMA

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE critics of Conrado de Quiros who tell him to stop writing negatively about the Arroyo administration.

De Quiros is well aware of the sins the government has committed against the people. He is also well aware of what is going on in our slowly dying nation. Most of all, he is aware that our country is a state at "war."

He knows that keeping silent will only aggravate the problems facing our nation. He offers ideas that could help us break the impasse our country is now in. But that is a task that will never be easy to accomplish. The problems have been with us for the past 500 years.

To build a strong nation requires genuine patriotism and nationalism and love of God. But first, let us look within ourselves and ask this question, "Am I willing to fight for my country?"

If we want our nation to be great, we have to kill the old, selfish and indifferent person in us. We have to bring out the selfless, patriotic person that has been sleeping within. Finding this new self will be the turning point for our country.

So, stop criticizing De Quiros, and start doing something for the country. We have a job to do and we have to do it for our nation and our sons and daughters.

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO,
7 Ipil St., Maywood 1 Village,
Parañaque City

Misleading allegations vs Bulacan gov

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS AND balanced reporting, allow me to clarify certain points raised in the news story titled "Mining permits issued by gov, says labor group." (PDI, 7/4/06) The story was not only grossly unfair to our governor, it was also misleading, to say the least. It did not present our side of the story. The governor could have shed light on the allegations raised against her.

- The power of the provincial governor to issue permits and licenses is clearly provided for by the Local Government Code and Sec. 71 of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995:

"Any qualified person may apply for a quarry permit with the Provincial Governor/City Mayor through the Provincial/City Mining Regulatory Board for the extraction, removal and disposition of quarry resources covering an area of not more than five (5) hectares for a term of five years from date of issuance."

- The issuance of the permit is scrutinized and deliberated on by members of the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB), which is composed of the regional director of the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (DENR-MGB) who sits as chair, and four members who represent the governor (usually, the head of the Environment and Natural Resources Qffice in the province), small-scale miners, big-scale miners and non-government organizations.
- The governor only issues a permit or license upon the endorsement of the PMRB.
- The same is true with the issuance of the Environment Compliance Certificate, which is provided for under DENR Admin Order No. 92-30, Sec 3.3. "Guidance for the transfer and implementation of DENR functions devolved to the government units."
- The records of the PMRB show no instance that the province issued a permit to firms sharing a common business address. The province or the board will not embark on clearly unlawful undertakings.
- We vehemently deny that Onofre Sebastian—who according to the INQUIRER story, was the provincial administrator—was ever a dummy of the governor. Sebastian served as the executive director of a Ford Foundation-funded education project in the province until his death in 2001. I have been the provincial administrator of Bulacan for 14 years now.
- The provincial government will continue to fight for the protection, preservation and restoration of the 2,117-hectare Biak na Bato National Park. The allegations against us are diversionary tactics and malicious attempts to confuse the public and discredit our crusade to put a stop to all forms of mining operations in Biak na Bato and to save the park.
- The provincial government always makes sure that the issuance of permits and licenses would not lead to the destruction of our natural resources and jeopardize the welfare of all stakeholders.

—MA. GLADYS C. STA. RITA,
provincial administrator,
Province of Bulacan

The information on the Biak na Bato controversy was given by sources named in the published stories. There was no intention to unduly put the governor in a bad light or muddle the issue.

—NORMAN BORDADORA,
PDI reporter

PCA clarifies coco export fees

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE news story, titled "PCA puts on hold plans to raise fees." (PDI, 7/5/06)

In the interview with INQUIRER reporter Christine Gaylican, I never mentioned that the Philippine Coconut Authority "has put on hold plans to increase" the PCA fee on coconut products for exports. Neither did I mention any "decision to indefinitely suspend the implementation of the hike."

What I clearly told her was that the oil millers opposed the increase because, according to them, it was untimely with the recent imposition of the VAT. True, the Philippine Coconut Oil Producers Association (Pcopa) had earlier filed a case in court, but again, the filing never stopped the collection of the fee at its current rate.

I told Gaylican that the matter will be elevated to the PCA governing board in its July 13 meeting, and that the position of the oil millers will be considered vis-à-vis the resolution of the board to pursue the long-delayed upgrading of the fees, in compliance with the directives of both the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Finance.

—ARTURO J. LIQUETE,
deputy administrator,
Philippine Coconut Authority,
Elliptical Road,
Diliman, Quezon City

In my interview with Mr. Liquete, he could not cite the exact implementation date of the increase in PCA fees because of the petition of the oil millers.

—CHRISTINE GAYLICAN,
PDI reporter

One Voice's position same as PDI's

ALLOW US TO CLARIFY THE POSITION of One Voice, as explained in various forums by Christian Monsod, former Comelec chair, on the 2007 polls as an indirect referendum on the administration.

We refer to the INQUIRER July 13 editorial which stated: "Opposition candidates can make the search for truth and justice the central issue of the campaign and hold the incumbents accountable for their vote in the impeachment complaint. This is better than the proposal of former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod to turn the 2007 polls into a referendum on the Arroyo administration, which would veer away from the issue of legitimacy and focus on the President's performance."

There is actually no contradiction or conflict between the INQUIRER proposal and ours. One Voice clearly states in its position paper that the 2007 elections, if credible, "can become an indirect referendum on the issue of whether the President should serve her full term, depending on how people choose their congressmen and senators, and how those elected exercise their mandate."

In other words, One Voice itself advocates that the search for truth and justice can be a central issue of the 2007 campaign, and that candidates can be held accountable for their stand on the impeachment complaint.

One Voice believes that impeachment is a constitutional process that should be given due course. It further believes, however, that the terminal point in the accountability system of our democracy is the vote of the people. If the present impeachment process does not prosper, the 2007 elections can provide an opportunity for people to directly render judgment on both the opposition and administration based not only on performance, but also on how they have prioritized and acted on matters that are crucial to the well-being of our country, including, if the people so desire, the impeachment charges.

The people can use the power of the ballot to decide whether this administration still has sufficient public support to move this country forward. Of course, for the verdict of the people to be clear, the electoral process must be credible. Hence, One Voice's urgent appeal for electoral reforms now.

—DR. BENJAMIN T. TOLOSA JR.,
(on behalf of One Voice),
chair, Political Science
Department,
Ateneo de Manila University

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W. Visayas workers get P17-P20 wage increase

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE REGIONAL TRIPARTITE Wages and Productivity Board in Western Visayas has approved a P17 to P20 increase in the daily minimum wage in the region.

Department of Labor and Employment Regional Director Carlos Boteros said yesterday that they would release tomorrow Wage Order No. 14, which would raise by P20 the daily wage level in the industrial/sugar mills sector and by P17-P19 those in the commercial and other agricultural sectors.

The new wage increase will raise the daily minimum wage in the region from P205 to P235.

The wage order shall take effect 15 days after its publication in a newspaper of regional circulation, Boteros added.

He said the new wage order would apply to all minimum wage earners in Western Visayas except household or domestic workers and persons in the personal service of another, including family drivers and workers of registered Barangay Micro-Business Enterprises with Certificates of Authority.

The minimum wage rates prescribed under Wage Order No. 14 will be for the normal working hours that should not exceed eight hours a day, he added.

Distressed establishments and new business enterprises can apply for exemption from the new wage order for one year, Boteros said.

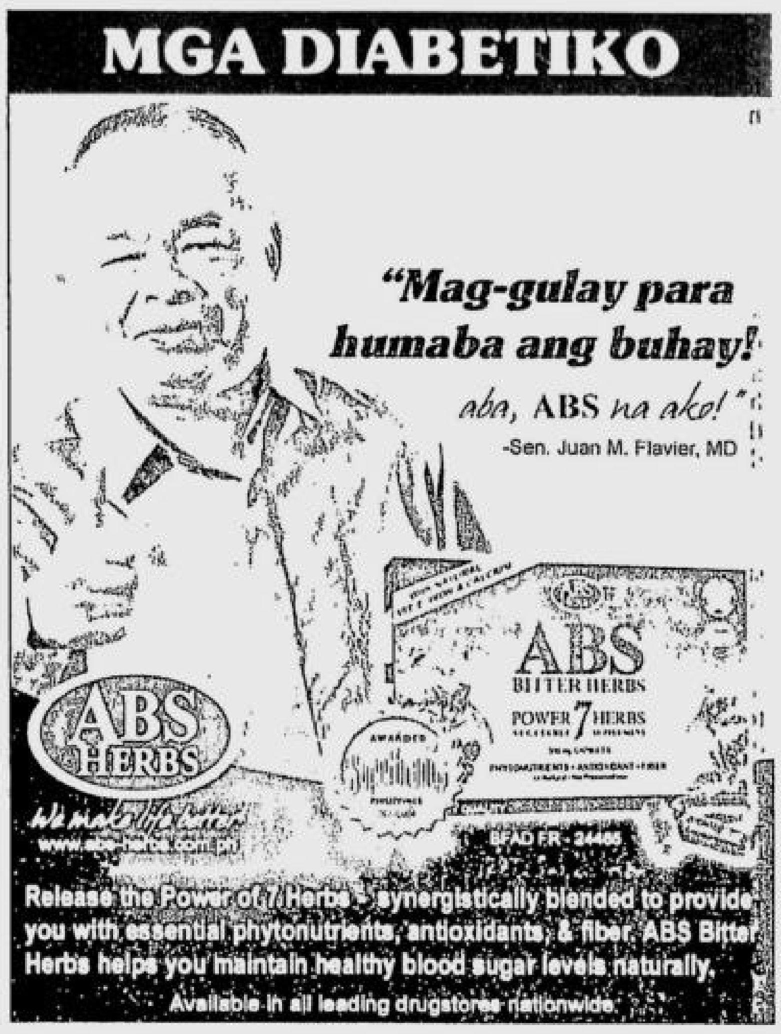
The new wage hike, which was way below the P75 a day demanded by sugar industry workers and other labor groups in the region, was reached following a series of public hearings held in various parts of the region over the last month.

Boteros said that a consensus to grant a P17-P20 daily wage increase was reached by members of the board Friday to provide the workers and their families with immediate relief, in addition to the efforts of the government to hold down prices of basic goods and services to cushion the impact of recent adjustments in the value of the peso and prices of petroleum products.

Under the new order, workers in the sugar industry working in sugar mills will be getting P235 a day.

For sugar plantations, workers for plantations with capitalization of more than P3 million will receive P203 a day; those with capitalization of not more than P3 million—P185; and for non-plantation workers—P180.

Wages for non-agricultural workers in industrial or commercial establishments with capitalization of more than P3 million—P222.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-Sen. Juan M. Flavier, MD

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Wages should be investor-friendly, says exec

DAVAO CITY—WAGE ORDERS, WHILE aimed at helping workers, are meant to be investor-friendly, a regional labor official said on Wednesday.

Gloria Tango, chair of the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board (RTWPB) in Southern Mindanao, told local reporters that one thing the members considered in coming up with a wage order was to make sure it was business-friendly.

"We also consider that the [order] we issue will encourage investors to come to an area where labor cost is cheaper," Tango said.

Tango, who is also regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment, issued the statement after the board approved Wage Order No. 11-13, which granted only a P16-increase in cost of living allowance (Cola) to daily minimum wage earners in Davao.

"What we have considered was the plea of the management to adjust the Cola instead of the daily minimum wage to lessen its impact to business. The new wage order is also in line with the government's mandate to increase employment," Tango said.

Labor representatives in the board, Virginia Camus and Jeorge Alegarbes, said they "vehemently dissented" the decision because the adjustment was too small, but that they had to abide by the rule that a new wage order would be issued by a majority vote.

"We are very sad because the wage adjustment that was granted is very meager. We didn't expect it because what is reasonable to us is an adjustment that will fit in to the current inflation rate of over 7 percent to 8.2 percent at the end of the year," Camus said.

Under the new wage order, workers employed in non-agricultural companies in cities in the Davao region will receive P240 in daily minimum pay.

For agriculture/plantation companies, workers will receive P230, while non-plantation workers will get P209.

Workers employed in retail and services with over 10 workers will receive P240 in daily minimum wage.

Factory worker Ramon Garzo said the new adjustment would not help them in any way.

Garzo even called for the disbandment of the RTWPB for being "pro-management."

Tango, however, said the P623 "living wage" already included health benefits, aside from food and education.

She said that based on the computation they made in accordance with international labor laws, the P16 Cola was reasonable.

Last year, the RTWPB granted a P15 Cola to workers in Southern Mindanao.

Tango said investments in Southern Mindanao grew from P2 billion in 2004 to P4.5 billion in 2005. *Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

AURORA PUBLISHER'S KILLING

Judge told to inhibit himself from trial

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—CHIEF State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño and four prosecutors have asked a judge to inhibit himself from the trial of a mayor and three other men charged with the murder of a publisher in Aurora last year.

In an urgent motion filed on July 3, the prosecutors said Judge Armando Yanga of the Regional Trial Court Branch 66 in Baler, Aurora, had "shown his bias and partiality in favor of the accused."

Zuño, state prosecutors Nestor Lazaro and Leo Dacera, and assistant provincial prosecutors Hyderabad Casar and Jonaldo Hernandez signed the motion.

They said Yanga "dissuaded" Rosebelle Cruz, the daughter of slain publisher Philip Agustin, from transferring the case to another court.

They said the judge had told state prosecutors that Agustin was a "sham journalist." He also admitted going to the crime scene before the trial on June 27, they added.

Yanga's "impression of the deceased and his manifest interest to immediately terminate the proceedings ... would deprive the people of the due process of law," they said.

Interviewed by phone on Tuesday, Yanga denied favoring Mayor Jaime Ylarde of Dingalan, Aurora, as well as the suspected gunmen Reynaldo and Nilo Morete and Manuel Alday.

The judge assailed the prosecutors for "making up stories."

"I did not say Agustin was a sham journalist," he said.

According to him, he encouraged Cruz to follow up her motion to transfer the trial in Manila.

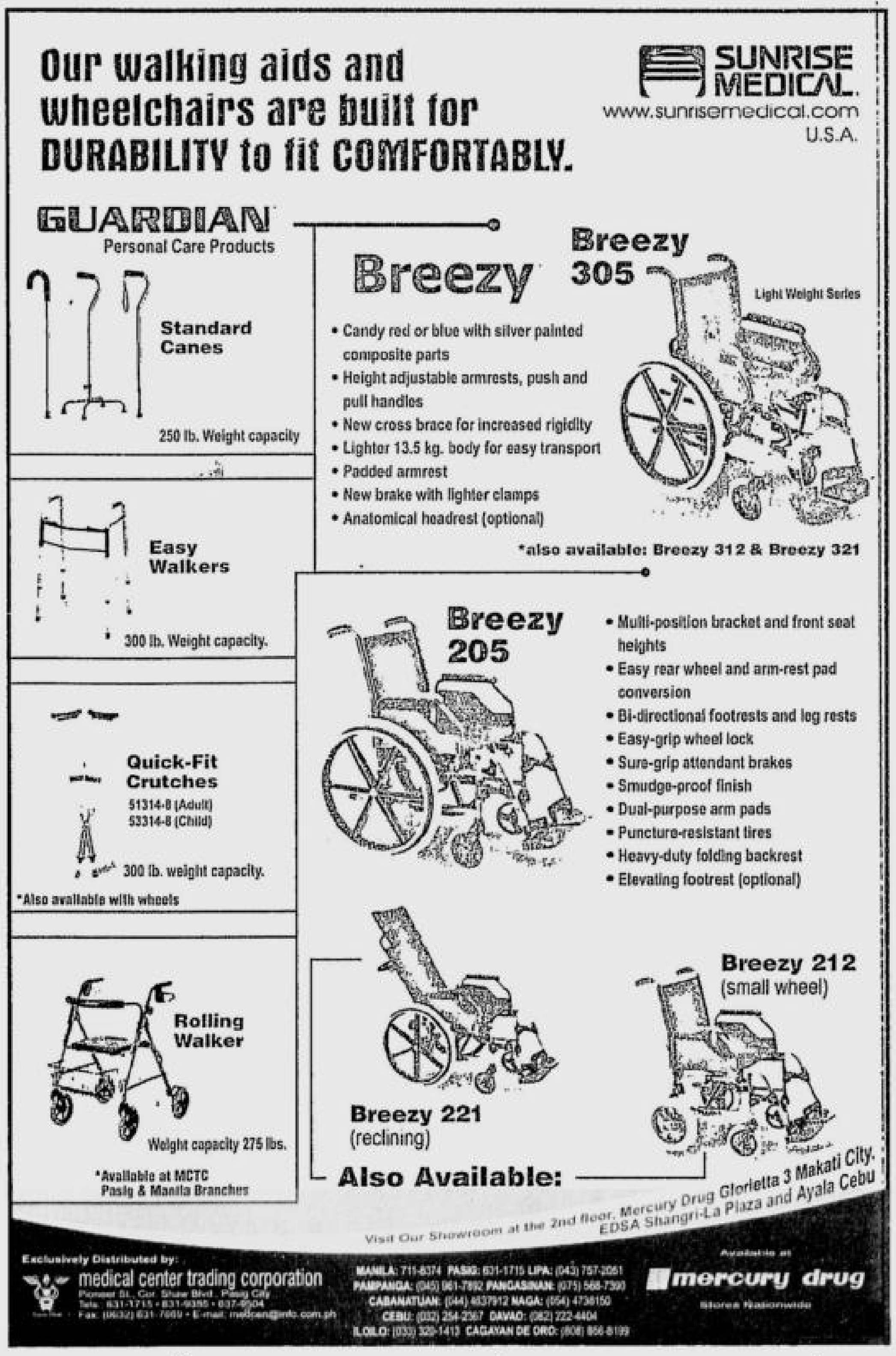
His nine years of being an RTC judge, Yanga said, was "never tainted by a case [that was allegedly] sold or compromised."

"*Wala akong nilutong kaso* (I did not manipulate any decision in the cases I handled)," he said.

Yanga said cases under him were "always decided based on their merits."

He chided the prosecution panel for presenting only two of 15 witnesses even when he promised to conduct marathon hearings on the case.

Cruz said she saw "no hope of getting justice" from Yanga's court. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*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GMA: God will judge who has been good

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Eleven days to her State of the Nation Address on July 24, President Macapagal-Arroyo reiterated her goal to be "a good president."

"I just want to be a good president," Ms Arroyo said in an interview at Clark's White House that was aired live from this former American base turned economic hub in Central Luzon, her home region.

She said she did not want to make that mark in history. "Because in the end, it's going to be God who will judge who has been good and not good," she said.

Asked if she thought she was doing better as president, Ms Arroyo said, "That's what I said, that for the Lord to be served till the end of my life."

This was the third time Ms Arroyo mentioned her goal. The first was shortly before the May 10, 2004 elections and the second was in a speech in an economic forum after her election. Both events were held in Clark.

At the joint meeting here of the Cabinet and the Regional Development Council in Central Luzon, which was the final consultation held for the creation of the four super regions, Ms Arroyo enumerated her administration's accomplishments.

She mentioned the 5.5-percent increase in gross domestic product in the first three months of 2006. "We may be expecting 6 percent for the second quarter," she said.

She described the $21 billion in current foreign exchange reserves as "a record high." The country, she noted, needed only $16 billion to meet foreign exchange needs.

These, she said, resulted in the "stability of the Philippines and therefore, continuing slowdown of inflation in spite of the fact that world oil prices are soaring."

"We had a historic P18 billion budget surplus in April and P5 billion in May, the biggest in almost a decade. And yet we are expected to balance our budget by 2008 or 2010," she told governors and regional economic planners.

There has also been a marked inflow in foreign direct investments, amounting to $500 million, in the year's first four months, she said.

Exports value grew by 17 percent in May, she said.

She attributed the growth in the government's coffers to the fiscal reforms of her administration.

She said that it was through these measures that the government was now able to fund projects and programs long awaited by people and the business sector.

"At last, the investments by government and business could take off. This is the key to the progress of our country and in overcoming poverty like what other developed countries in Asia and other parts of the world had shown. At last, the Filipino is ready to rise and join the league of prosperity, peace and genuine freedom," she said.

She added: "Today we shall bring that day of national resurgence closer by unleashing the great strategic investments and development initiatives of the Metro Luzon urban beltway super-region or sub economies as what we have already done with North Luzon, Central Philippines and Mindanao."

According to her, the results of RDC consultations would be used in the revised Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan and her Sona.

She said public investments in the regions need to be done so the government could increase its capital stock by 10 percent a year to catch up with other Asian countries.

Government would spend P100 billion yearly in developing the four super-regions through infrastructures, social development, security, livelihood and enterprise facilities and good governance, she said.

These, she said, would solve the problems of employment, food and prices. The funds would come from tax and administrative reforms, she said.

FLORITA FIND
A big lizard that surfaced at the height of Typhoon "Florita" is sold for P300 in Candon City, Ilocos Sur.
LEONCIO BALBIN JR /PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Local exec in dog killing faces raps

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—A VILLAGE official is facing cases of abuse of authority and grave misconduct after he was accused of ordering the butchering of a dog owned by a resident in his village.

The complainant, Rev. Crisanto Tenorio, resident pastor of the Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ (PMCC), said Rizalino Villanueva, barangay council member of Bonfal West, ordered his farm workers to kill his pet, a 3-year-old Labrador, in March.

Tenorio's complaint, dated June 21, was filed before the municipal board.

Tenorio and his wife asked the council to suspend Villanueva or remove him from office. They also asked the council to order the official to pay them P45,000 for the dog and another P50,000 for moral damages and cost of suit.

In their affidavit, the Tenorio couple said their dog, which was usually tied in front of their church, was able to free himself and roamed in the village for several days.

The couple said they were only informed three days later by their neighbors that their dog was hacked and killed by Arnel Bautista and Arthur Rivera, farm workers of Villanueva.

Bautista and Rivera, in their affidavit, identified Villanueva as the one who ordered them to kill the dog.

They said Villanueva asked them to kill the dog since it was straying into his rice field.

They said they butchered the dog at the house of Villanueva's brother and divided the meat.

Villanueva, they said, got two legs and the head while the remaining parts were given to them and three more friends.

"We were drinking at the house of Villanueva's brother and even asked him what if someone would claim ownership of the dog. But he said it will be his responsibility if somebody looked for the dog," Bautista and Rivera said.

But Villanueva denied his participation in the incident, saying he was not present when his farm workers killed the dog.

"I left them since I have something to do in my farm. I did not order them to kill the dog and I did not receive any share from it. When I returned, my workers were no longer around, only our neighbors told me that my farm workers killed a dog," he said.
Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

New Isabela town mayor proclaimed

ILAGAN, ISABELA—A NEW MAYOR IN RAmon town was proclaimed on Friday after a weeklong recanvassing of votes cast during the mayoral race in May 2004.

Lawyer Anthony Jerbee Cortez, Santiago City election officer and Ramon canvassing board chair, proclaimed Wilfredo Tabag of the Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Laban as the new mayor.

The decision came amid protests of former Mayor Raymond Espidol, who questioned election returns from 42 precincts in the town.

The Supreme Court last year nullified Espidol's proclamation when it upheld the order of the Commission on Elections that voided his proclamation.

After the recanvassing of votes, Tabag was credited with 8,228 votes while Espidol got 6,916 votes. Former Mayor Renato Vizcarra was third with 2,275 votes.

Laila Bohol-de Lima, Espidol's lawyer, asked the board of canvassers to defer Tabag's proclamation, citing the former mayor's pending appeal to look at claims that the canvassed election returns were "spurious."

Espidol claimed that some votes cast for him were credited instead to Tabag.

But Francisco Sibayan, Tabag's lawyer, said the decision of the board was proper.

Tabag said he said he would assume office on Monday.

In the May 2004 canvassing, Espidol obtained 8,617 votes while Tabag got 6,635 votes. However, the Supreme Court noted that "there was a discrepancy between the number of votes cast for the mayoral candidates and the number of votes actually cast during the last elections." *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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at mga Pamahalaang Lokal

DEPED HEROES

2 teachers die helping others

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THEY died because they wanted to help others who they believed were in trouble.

The deed of the two and only teachers of the Pangapuyan Elementary School in Pangapuyan Island, about two hours by pumpboat from here, was a heroic act, according to Western Mindanao education officials who wanted to honor them.

Anaisa Gapor, 25, and Garcita Ramirez-Kamsain and her son Candua, 3, were on their way home at around 1 a.m. on July 11 from the island when they met their tragic death.

Chief Insp. Hado Edding, chief of the Tetuan police station, said two hours before the three died, policemen clashed with a group of drug pushers led by the Ambotong brothers.

Arrested

He said one of the suspects was arrested but two others were able to escape on a pumpboat.

He said the drug pushers later crossed paths with the pumpboat carrying the teachers.

Jainal Nuddin, operator of the pumpboat carrying the teachers and the boy, said they saw a motorized banca which was apparently having engine trouble.

"We approached the banca. When the two teachers saw that one of the passengers was injured, they urged me to help," Nuddin said.

But one of the men in the banca suddenly poked a gun at them and ordered them to jump into the waters.

Apparently, the teachers did not know how to swim and struggled for their lives.

Drowning teachers

Nuddin said he wanted to help the drowning teachers and the boy but could not do anything.

Abdu Rahim Kenoh, assistant superintendent of the Zamboanga City Division, said what the two teachers did was praiseworthy.

"They risked their lives to rescue what they believed were injured fishermen," Kenoh said.

He said the death of the two teachers was also a big loss to the pupils of the Pangapuyan Elementary School.

Gapor and Kamsain were the only teachers in the school.

"For us, they are heroes, so aside from passing the hats to help their families, we would also like to extend something," Kenoh said. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Woman faces charges of 'special child' abuse

PAGADIAN CITY—A NON-GOVERNMENT group working for abused children and women is preparing charges against a woman who has been reportedly hurting her 28-year-old deaf daughter.

Katherine Sarabia, legal staff of Sabakan, said her group had started gathering evidence to send the woman to jail for physically abusing her child.

The victim, considered a special child, has threatened to commit suicide as she could no longer bear the abuses, according to Sarabia.

Sarabia said the mother could be sued under Republic Act No. 7610 or the law protecting children against abuse. Even if the daughter is already 28 years old, she is still protected under the law, she explained.

The law defines children as persons below 18 or those above 18, who are unable to take care of themselves, she said. Blind, deaf and children with mental disabilities are some of the examples of special children.

Emma Andales, who teaches at a school for special children called the Hangop Kabataan, said the 28-year-old arrived on Thursday with bruises and contusions in the arms and legs.

"We learned about her condition when her classmates reported to us that Angel (not her real name) was crying and has *pasa* (bruises)," Andales told the INQUIRER.

Andales said the student was threatening to commit suicide, prompting school officials to report the case to Sabakan and to police.

Lucy Endonto, another teacher, said Angel, through sign language, had indicated "it is better to die than be beaten by her mother again."

She said it was not the first time she saw Angel with bruises.

She said Angel was also being abused by her siblings.

"We already suspected that the child is a victim of physical abuse but she avoided talking (about her situation) until last Thursday," she said.

Endonto said the teachers had found that the mother, a money-lender and single parent, would blame Angel every time part of her collections was missing.

She said Angel had told them that her brothers took the money.

Endonto said Angel had tried to tell her mother about it but she could not understand sign language.

Sarabia said Angel's case would also be referred to the local social welfare office. *Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Caraga villages know little of domestic violence law

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL Sur—Many village officials in Caraga region still know little about the law aimed at protecting women and children from domestic violence, according to a local government official.

Annabelle Yangson, regional operations officer of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, said only 17 of the 1,008 barangay chairs were familiar with Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, two years after it was signed into law.

Yangson said that only the 17 village officials were monitored to have been issuing Barangay Protection Orders (BPOs), which bar perpetrators of domestic violence from further committing abuses.

She said the DILG had conducted an information drive about the law in at least 845 barangays in the region.

But it seems that these were not enough for barangay officials to start acting against domestic violence, she said.

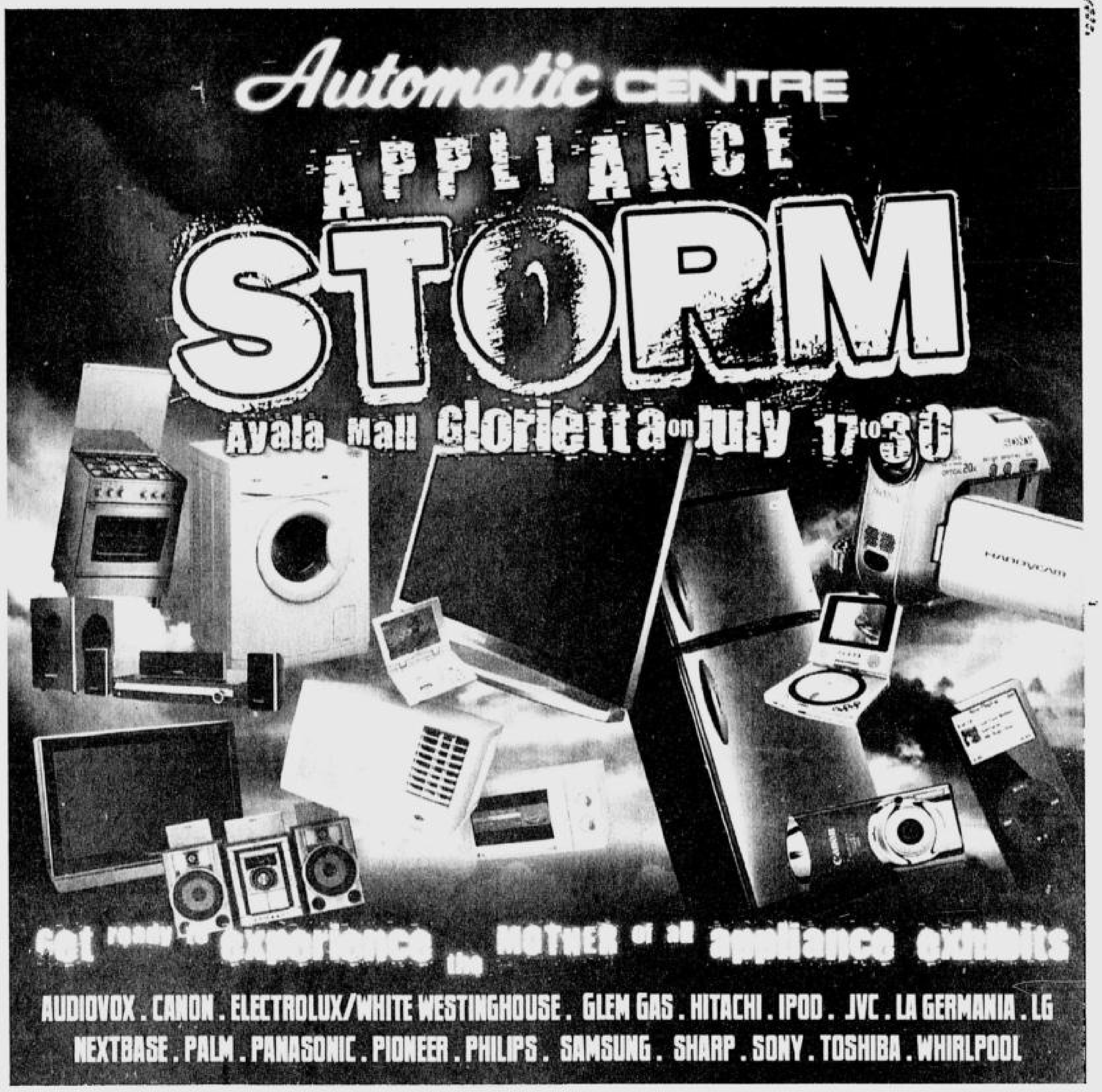
Of the four provinces in Caraga, Agusan del Sur has the most number of barangays that have issued BPOs, particularly in the towns of San Francisco, Sta. Josefa and Trento.

In Surigao del Sur, only three barangays were issuing the BPOs, two in Surigao del Norte, and none in Agusan del Norte.

Surigao City has three barangays issuing the BPOs, Butuan City, two and Bislig City, zero, although orientation briefings had already been conducted there, Yangson said.

A high incidence of attacks on women and minors has been noted in the region, especially in the countryside, she said.

Records at the provincial jail in Agusan del Sur revealed that from January to May 23, at least 40 inmates faced rape charges. A number of incest cases or men sexually abusing their daughters were also noted. *Chris Panganiban, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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Dengue deaths up in Central Visayas–DOH

CEBU CITY—ALTHOUGH CASES OF dengue fever in Central Visayas have declined in the first half of the year compared to last year, deaths attributed to the mosquito-borne disease have risen during the same period, according to a regional health official.

The number of deaths rose to 25 from Jan. 1 to July 12, or 72 percent higher than the 18 recorded over the same period last year, Rennan Cimafranca, regional epidemiologist of the Department of Health, said.

However, he said, the number of cases had gone down by 51 percent, from 1,448 last year to 738 this year. Thus, the overall dengue situation in the region was not alarming, he stressed.

Cimafranca said more patients had died because they were not immediately brought to doctors and had suffered reinfection.

Children who had been afflicted with dengue in the past are at risk of getting infected again, he said. Reinfection is more dangerous, he said, because the patient's resistance had already been weakened.

Most of the deaths occurred in the city, including two boys from a subvillage in the mountain barangay of Kalunasan who died between June and July, and another boy, aged 5, from the village who died June 10 at a private hospital here.

A 9-year-old boy also died June 10 in Barangay Tapilon, Daanbantayan, Cebu.

Two sisters, aged 3 and 5, from Barangay Looc in Mandaue City also died from dengue complications on June 30 and July 3, DOH records showed.

Mandaue health officer Oscar Quirante said Looc had been declared a dengue hot spot. He attributed the spread of the disease to stagnant water, the breeding ground for mosquitoes, in the defective drainage system.

No cases of dengue were reported in Looc last year, he noted.

Quirante said his office had already asked the city engineering department to repair the drainage facility.

Cimafranca urged the different health units in the region to sustain their campaigns against the killer disease. Last month, health officials launched the Dengue Prevention Month at the onset of the rainy season.

To prevent dengue, the DOH urged everyone to cooperate in the daily cleanup of surroundings, especially in areas where the dengue-carrying mosquito could breed. *Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

FLOOD OF JOY

Children of Barangay Rimos in Luna, La Union enjoy their flooded backyard, at the height of Typhoon "Florita."

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

NA NAMAN?!

"Bilasa na, binubuhay pa!"

Walang katapusang demanda at kontra-demanda, mga usapang impeachment. Sayang lang ang oras na ginugugol sa mga interes na iilan lang naman ang nakikinabang!

Paano naman ang maraming taong kagaya ko na nagsusumikap kumita ng marangal sa araw-araw? Kung direktang kapakanan na lang ba namin ang pinagtatalunan ninyo, e 'di mas masaya!

Beata D. Centillas
Market vendor

TAMA NA ANG GULO,
PARA TAYO'Y UMASENSO.

MASA BANSA
PAGKAKAISA AT PAGBABAGO

Gloria defended on super regions

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon came to the defense of President Macapagal-Arroyo for her creation of four "super regions" amid allegations that it could just be a ploy to deflect the people's attention from moves to impeach her.

The four regions are North Luzon, Metro Luzon, Central Philippines and Mindanao.

The Central Philippines mega-region is composed of Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan or Region 4-B), Bicol (5), Western Visayas (6), Central Visayas (7) and Eastern Visayas (8).

"At least she makes plans for the country. She has some objectives, she has some vision. As to how she will achieve it, that is another story," the governor said.

Consolidation

Marañon said the current regional structures would remain, as placing several regions under one super region is just for consolidating projects and for planning.

Among the programs in the medium-term development plan are the proposed bridges that would interconnect Panay, Negros, Cebu and Bohol, he said.

"The building of the bridges is quite ambitious because the financial requirements are huge but at least they have been included in the master plan. Before, we were told we were just dreamers and now a feasibility study is under way," he said.

Development

Binalonan (Pangasinan) Mayor Ramon Guico Jr., president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, also believed that super regions were good for the country because they would hasten development.

"There is nothing bad that can come out of this, it will just highlight the need to decentralize to spur development in the countryside," added Mayor Alfonso Gamboa of EB Magalona town in Negros Occidental.

GMA wants to turn 4 cities, Clark zone into cyber corridor

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—ON top of the four planned super regions, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the creation of a cyber corridor covering the cities of Baguio, Cebu, Davao and Manila and the Clark Special Economic Zone.

The development of this corridor, which hosts numerous call centers and outsourcing companies, will be supported through additional digital infrastructures, Ms Arroyo said during a joint meeting of the Cabinet and the Regional Development Council in Central Luzon on Thursday.

The funds, she said, would come from portions of the P100 billion earmarked for public investments in the super regions of Metro Luzon, North Luzon, Central Philippines and Mindanao.

North Luzon and Mindanao are planned as hubs for agriculture-based businesses.

Metro Luzon—comprising Subic and Clark, Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Batangas, southern portions of Nueva Ecija and Aurora and Mindoro and Marinduque islands—is designed as the urban beltway, which will be fitted with new highways, railways, airports and seaports.

At least 55 percent of the country's gross domestic product comes from these areas, Ms Arroyo said.

Infrastructure facilities in Central Philippines, where 55 percent of tourists have been flocking, will be improved to enhance the tourism potentials there.

"This is not political. We are not disturbing the regional development councils or structures. We are dividing the whole Philippine economy into four sub-economies based on their competitive advantage," Ms Arroyo said before presiding over the final regional consultations here.

The Philippines is ready to undertake the development of sub-economies because the national economy is now in order due to tax and administrative reforms, she said.

She cited the 5.5-percent increase in GDP in the first three months, the $21 billion in foreign exchange reserves, the P18-billion budget surplus in April, the $500 million in foreign direct investments from January to April, and the 17-percent growth in exports for the same period.

The President said government investments in public infrastructures, social development, security, livelihood and enterprise facilities and good governance aimed to increase the state's capital stock by 10 percent a year to catch up with the public investment rate of other Asian countries.

Central Philippines 'super region' infrastructure to cost P300 billion

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREments for the five-year development of Central Philippines could reach P300 billion, according to Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri.

Neri, who was interviewed after the joint Regional Development Council (RDC) and Cabinet meeting held on July 7 at the Malacañang sa Sugbo here, said part of the amount would come from the government and the rest from the private sector through a build-operate-transfer scheme.

He could not say, however, how much of the amount would come from the government. The key infrastructure projects for Central Philippines include construction or rehabilitation of roads, ports, airports, power, irrigation and flood control projects, Neri said.

During the opening of the joint RDC-Cabinet meeting, President Macapagal-Arroyo has identified Central Philippines—composed of the Visayas, Bicol, Palawan and Romblon, Camiguin and the Mindanao islands of Dapitan and Siargao—as the tourism center of the Philippines.

The President said the government must increase investments in education and infrastructure to make Central Philippines the tourism hub.

"To their competitive advantage, we will bolster education, invest in infrastructure and encourage greater tourism investments and business process outsourcing in Cebu and its immediate neighbors, like Dumaguete," Ms Arroyo said.

During the RDC-Cabinet meeting, Neri said the national government identified several strategies for Central Philippines.

These include harnessing the vast coastal and marine resources and addressing the small islands' fragile ecosystem; linking the islands through efficient transportation and communication facilities; promoting the Southern Tourism Center; developing the potentials of agribusiness, export and small and medium enterprises; pursuing responsible mining and quarrying; optimizing power potentials and ensuring adequacy and sustainability of the supply; and enhancing social services.

During a presentation on Central Philippines, Neri noted that the region accounted for 39 percent of the country's total coastline. It has several rich fishing grounds, such as the Visayan Sea, Lamon Bay, Lagonoy Gulf, Romblon Pass, Bohol Sea, Sibuyan Sea, Iloilo Strait, Tañon Strait, Samar Sea and Leyte Gulf.

The Central Philippines' share in the country's total fish production is 37 percent.

The government is also proposing the establishment of mariculture parks in the super region. Mariculture is the cultivation of marine organisms for food.

In addition to the 10 existing parks, the government plans to set up mariculture parks in Samar, Camotes Island in Cebu, Bohol, Negros and Palawan.

Central Philippines also contributes 20.8 percent of gross domestic product, he added. Its growth centers include Metro Naga, Metro Legazpi, Metro Tacloban, the cities of Puerto Princesa, Iloilo, Bacolod, Dumaguete and Tagbilaran, and Metro Cebu.

The national government also plans to improve the linkages of the existing nautical highway by developing or rehabilitating lateral roads that connect to existing or proposed ports with roll-on, roll off facilities.

The implementation of the various infrastructure projects is expected to reduce travel time from Mindanao through Visayas to Luzon, and vice versa, by 10 hours.

Gov't to stop aiding kin of victims of sea tragedy

LEGAZPI CITY—RELATIVES OF victims of the May 12 sinking of the MB Mae Ann 5 off Masbate City at the height of tropical storm "Caloy" can expect very little help from the government in terms of financial assistance, the Office of Civil Defense said.

The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) has released a memorandum ordering a stop in the processing of requests for financial assistance.

NDCC executive officer Glenn Rabonza blamed the sea tragedy on the boat's owner, skipper, crew and ticket seller who, he said, should be the ones to help the victims' relatives.

Last month, relatives of the 27 passenger victims were at a loss on how to claim compensation from the vessel's owner, Lobrigo Shipping Lines (LSL). With the latest NDCC memorandum, their hope for government assistance has been dashed away, too.

Nestor Lobrigo of LSL said he had already extended financial assistance to 10 of the victims. However, he said there was a limit to what the company could give.

"We cannot shoulder everything because it will be tantamount to our admission that the tragedy was all our fault, when, in fact, it was just an accident," Lobrigo said in a phone interview.

Those who have not yet received compensation will also be paid, Lobrigo said, but he could not say when.

OCD regional police officer Cherry Abion has clarified the NDCC policies on financial assistance.

- It covers only casualties of natural disasters, such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, lightnings and epidemics.
- Victims of manmade disasters, such as fires, vehicular accidents, bombings, air and sea accidents, are not covered.
- Relatives of the dead will receive P10,000, while P5,000 will be given to the injured. The amounts will be drawn from the NDCC calamity fund.
- All claims are only valid within one year from the time the disaster or calamity occurred.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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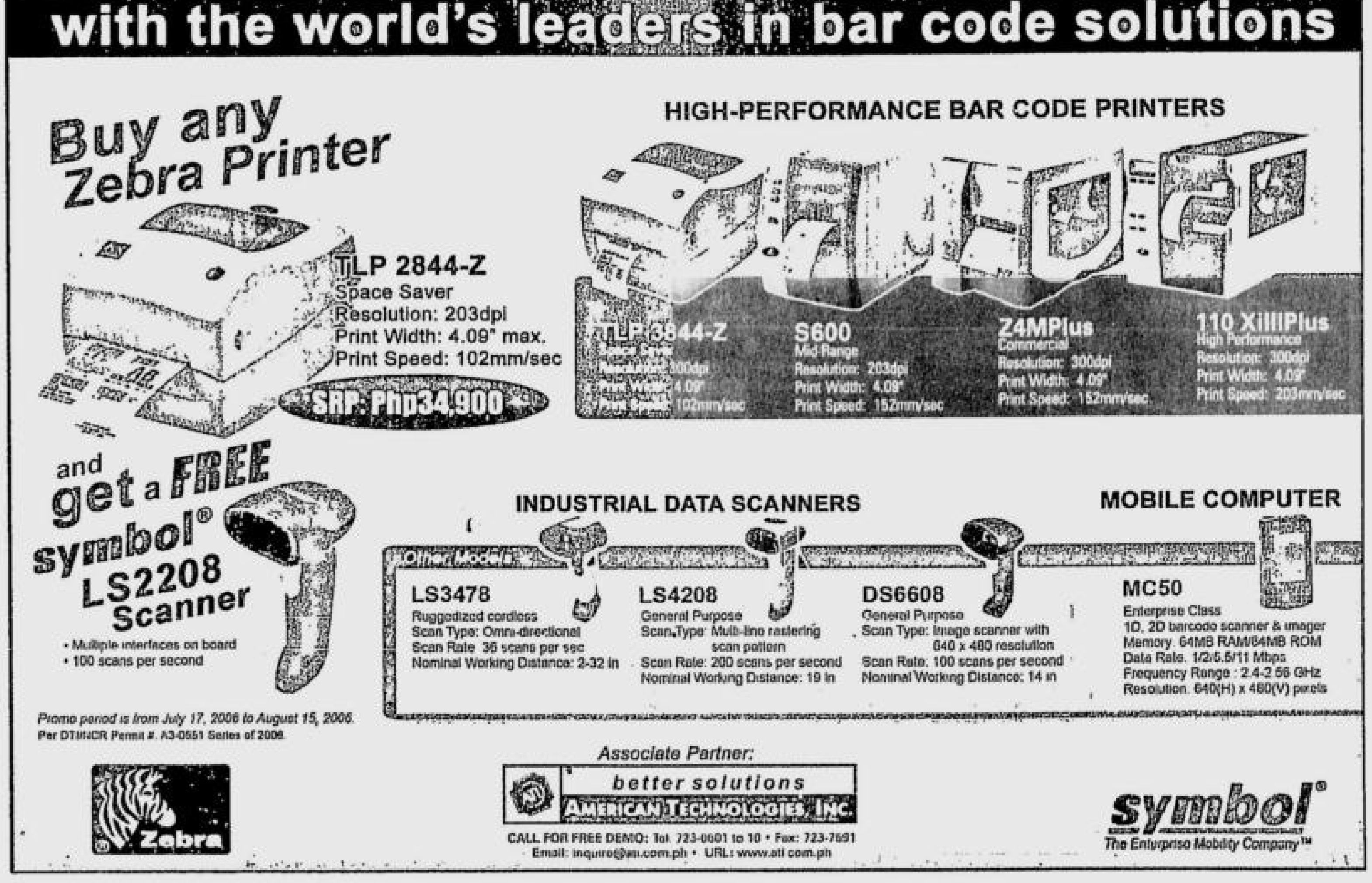
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GMA orders probe of land price hike at interchange site

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday ordered an investigation into the increase in the value of land at the future site of the interchange of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) in Mabalacat, Pampanga.

In an interview by local radio stations, the President said she had instructed Finance Secretary Margarito Teves to investigate the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the landowner for increasing the assessed value from P1,000 to P10,000 per square meter.

The new price, Ms Arroyo said, would cost the government nearly P1 billion to acquire the land.

The SCTEx, a 94-km highway being built on a P21-billion loan from Japan, connects the Subic Bay Freeport in Bataan and Zambales, the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga and Tarlac, and the Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac City.

The four-lane road passes through nine towns and two cities in Bataan, Pampanga and Tarlac.

According to Ms Arroyo, Narciso Abaya, president and chief executive officer of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA), has suspected a "connivance" between the BIR and the landowner, who was not named. The BCDA is the proponent of the SCTEx, one of the Arroyo administration's flagship projects.

"This is bad for the development of the whole region. This is embarrassing to the world which is monitoring the project," Ms Arroyo said.

"Those who are jacking up the prices of real property are not helping us in any way," she said in Filipino.

She cited the problem again at a joint meeting of the Cabinet and the Regional Development Council in Central Luzon, also on Thursday.

The project is one-third finished, with the Subic-Clark segment to be opened in November 2007 and the Clark-Tarlac segment by August next year.

As the new road makes the Clark airport and the Subic seaport less than 40 minutes away, Ms Arroyo expects the area to become a "new Ayala," referring to the business district the Ayala family has developed out of Makati City.

This, she added, was why she took in Francisco Licuanan III, former Ayala Land Inc. president, as head of the Subic-Clark Alliance Development Council (Scad).

Licuanan resigned last year over supposed meddling by politicians in the economic development of the two economic zones.

"This will be the most viable real estate in the coming years because of the economic development we are infusing in the area," Ms Arroyo said.

Repeating the plan she announced in her State of the Nation Address in 2004, she said Subic and Clark, as a single growth corridor, would be the most efficient logistics hub in Southeast Asia.

"This is what we must do. This is our vision and we should all contribute to this vision," she said.

Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, Scad chief, told Ms Arroyo that the council was fast-tracking the promotions of the Subic-Clark growth area.

"We all have to make it happen," Ms Arroyo said.

In a statement on Thursday, Abaya urged local governments to "start planning" for the opening of the SCTEx.

The planning, he said, would "ensure they would not be left out from the socio-economic benefits that come with the country's longest toll road to date."

"We expect investors to take notice of the convergence of air, sea and land transport and eventually put up shop in Clark, Subic and other economic zones and industrial parks in Central Luzon, including those that will be established along the Subic-Clark corridor," he said.

Abaya said the BCDA did not want local governments to be competing for the same investors in a climate of cutthroat competition. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THREATENED IÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
The Bonga Gully in Legazpi City at the foot of Mayon Volcano is almost always affected when the volcano erupts. In the 2001 eruption, life-threatening pyroclastic flows swept through this gully.

₱165-M scam case not moving in Ombudsman

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—TWO YEARS after graft complaints were filed in connection with the P165-million Talibon Dam scam, the Office of the Ombudsman Visayas still has yet to file a single case in court.

The Boholanos Against Corruption, Oppression and Social Harassment (Bacos) on Saturday lamented that the case had not progressed at the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas since they filed charges against Irrigation officials here on June 14, 2004 over alleged anomalies in the release of funds for the construction of the P165-million Talibon Small Irrigation Project.

"This is an anniversary statement of both pain and hope," declared Bacos in a statement issued Friday.

The statement was signed by engineer Petronilo Sarigumba and lawyer Artemio Cabatos, Bacos spokesperson and chair, respectively.

Bacos filed the complaint against provincial irrigation officer Calixto Seroje and all those responsible for the ghost project in Barangay Zamora, Talibon town.

It said the funding allocation had been used up, but the reservoir was still nowhere to be found.

The group recalled that "after enervating months of investigation, which we found unusual," the Ombudsman (Visayas) finally came up with a Final Evaluation Report finding *prima facie* evidence against Seroje and, possibly other National Irrigation Administration officials.

"Of course, those of us who have spent long years in vindicating people's rights and protecting them against unlawful invasions by corrupt officials danced to the heavens over that positive development," Bacos said.

To its dismay, however, Bacos said that no charges had been filed in court in connection with the case.

"Two years of waiting is far from the ordinary, leading us to suspect that certain 'powerful' officials of (President Macapagal-Arroyo's) regime are dipping their malicious hands into the case," Bacos added.

Bacos said the failure of the Ombudsman to act on the case was a "big blow" to the government in its avowed campaign against corruption.

Villagers in landslide-prone areas in Laguna won't leave

By Romulo O. Ponte
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PANGIL, LAGUNA—DESPITE WARNINGS FROM government geologists and efforts of local officials to move them to safe grounds, some residents of Barangay Dambo here who might be affected by the loosening of mountain soil are reluctant to abandon their homes.

Dambo is 5 km by banca or 15 km by land from the town proper, which is 21 km from the provincial capitol.

Betty Arozena, 62, widow and whose family is one of those affected, suggested that the evacuation should only be temporary, that is, only during rainy days.

Many of the houses that might be affected are big and that their occupants had spent large sums of money for their construction and maintenance she said.

Geologists from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau earlier urged the residents to evacuate after completing on March 30 an inspection of a 300-meter crack in a landslide-scarred mountain here.

The experts were accompanied by barangay Councilors Jesus Jaime de Guia and Mariano Aco and deputy chief barangay tanod Carlito Alvarez during the inspection.

Landslide

The MGB and local officials fear that the mountain's current condition could result in a disaster like that in Guinsaugon, Southern Leyte, in February, where a landslide buried alive about 800 people.

Their urgent appeal prompted provincial, municipal and barangay officials to join hands in offering a tract of land for relocation, financial assistance and materials for the construction of houses to 64 families who will evacuate.

Mayor Juanita Manzana and Dambo chair Rosendo Corales and their councils were able to find a relocation site for the evacuees.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will supply the posts and lumber for the construction of the houses, said Maria Paz Santos, municipal planning and management coordinator.

Arozena said the residents were asked to transfer to a 40-sqm relocation site and would be given P3,000 cash, provided they immediately demolish their houses and use the old materials to build new homes.

She said that when her husband was still alive four years ago, he had told her about the crack in the mountain but it was only a few meters long and the cavity was narrow.

Today, she was told that the crack had stretched to 300 meters long and the gap could swallow a cow or carabao.

Chief geologist Elmer Billedo and supervising geologist Rolando Ranes said in their report that Damon is situated along the eastern margin of the Jalajala Peninsula, which is along the paths of numerous local faults. Dambo is south of the convergence point of three faults.

The mountainous area affected by the slides is composed of bedded rocks collectively called the Guadalupe Formation of Plestocene. These rocks are moderately to highly fractured and jointed.

Numerous small and large-scale landslides have occurred in the village.

The MGB officials theorized that the landslides could have happened in November 2004, probably on the same day when landslides and flood occurred in the municipalities of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in Quezon province.

Relocation

They strongly recommended several mitigation measures, like the relocation of all residents whose homes are found directly downslope of the slide debris and the "cracked" hill slope before the La Niña phenomenon gets worse.

The officials advised against visits to farms and household properties during heavy rains.

They further recommended the construction of drainage canals along the sides and heads of the slide debris to divert surface runoff that may accelerate the occurrence of massive mudflow.

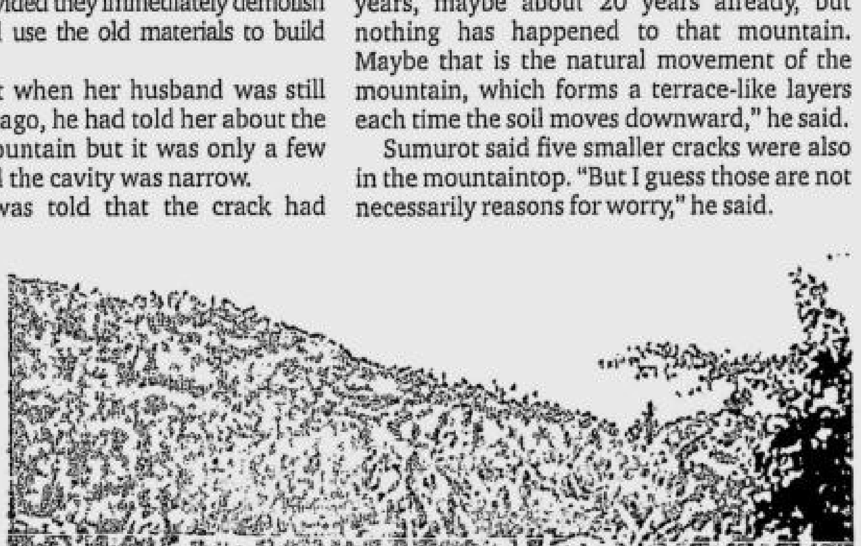
There is also a need to pile up boulders and cobbles like riprap along the walls of the canals adjacent to the slide debris, they added.

The MGB experts urged the planting of wild species of broad-leaf vines and other grass species over the slide debris, as well as the ornamental "*balete*" or rubber trees in the faces of the slides so that their root systems could bind rock fragments and soil together.

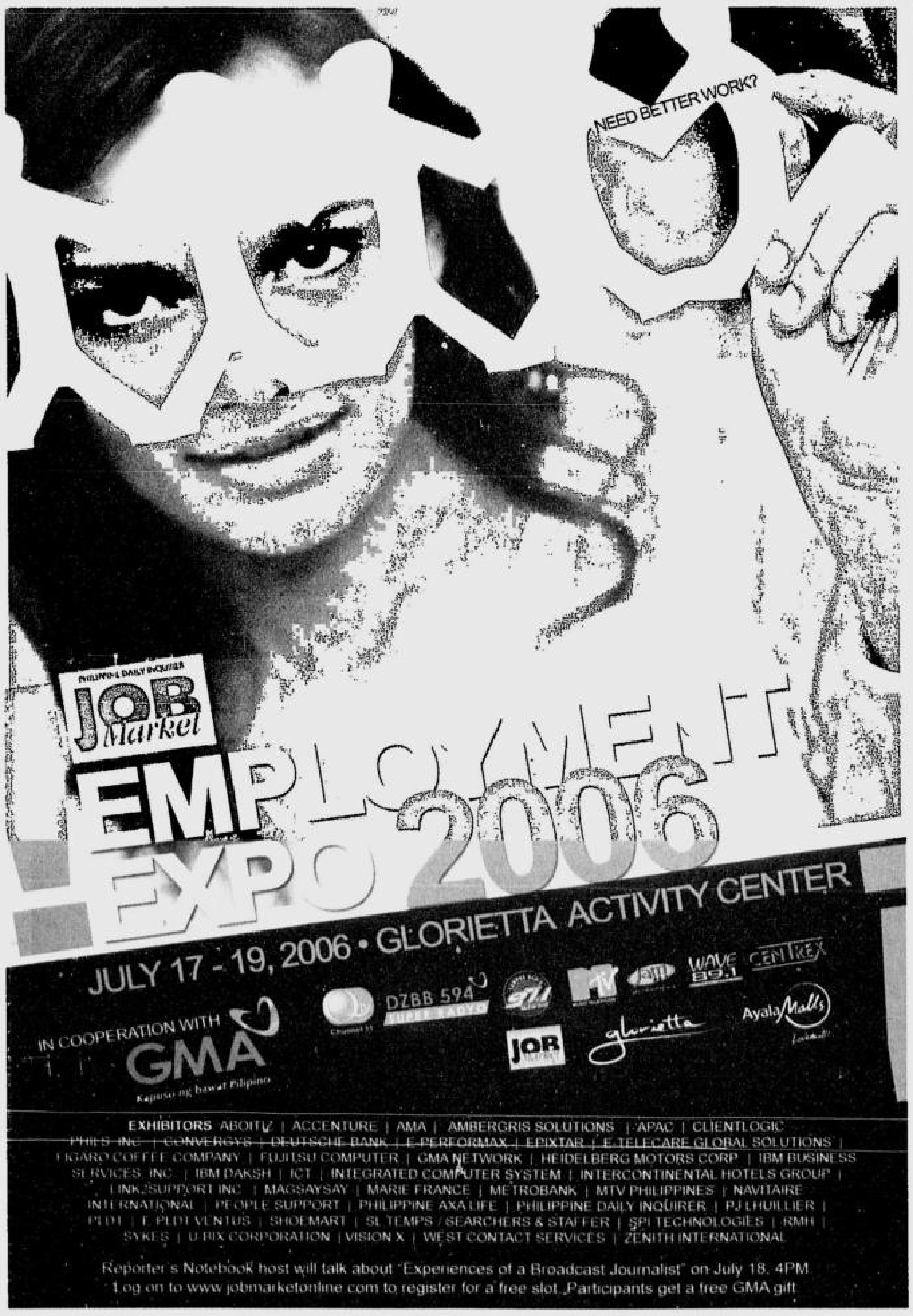
Salvador Sumurot, 45, a barangay kagawad of Dambo, however, questioned media reports, which, he said, was exaggerated, giving the impression that their village's condition was very serious.

"That cracks have been there for so many years, maybe about 20 years already, but nothing has happened to that mountain. Maybe that is the natural movement of the mountain, which forms a terrace-like layers each time the soil moves downward," he said.

Sumurot said five smaller cracks were also in the mountaintop. "But I guess those are not necessarily reasons for worry," he said.



SEVERAL landslide scars experienced every time there is a heavy downpour put Pangil, Laguna villagers at the foot of this mountain at risk. ROMULO PONTE/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU



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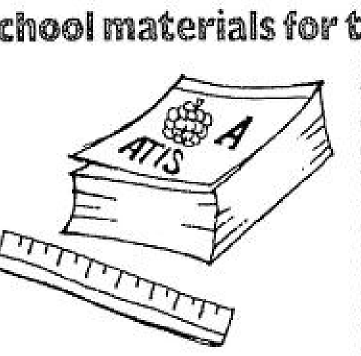
TRAPPED AND TAGGED RAY B. ZAMBRANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Dagupan Administrator Rafael Baraan holds a Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*) as Marlyn Banda of Community Environment and Natural Resources Office tags it. A fisherman turned over the turtle, an endangered species, to authorities after it was trapped in a fish net in the city's Barangay Pugaro.

ROUNDUP

School materials for tribes



BAGUIO CITY—Determined to improve the quality of education for indigenous communities, the Department of Education is preparing learning materials for what it calls "indigenous peoples (IP) education." The program is part of the DepEd's thrust to achieve a 100-percent functional literacy rate in the country through alternative learning systems, Dr. Carolina Guerrero, director of the Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems, said in a recent briefing here. The indigenous learning materials, which are anchored on tradition and customary environmental laws, will be tested in September in six indigenous communities that the department will monitor, she said. Quezon, Mindoro and Zambales are among the provinces that will first benefit from the project, she said.

Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Slain radioman's case

LAOAG CITY—The case records of slain broadcaster Roger Mariano have been sent to the regional trial court in Manila in compliance with a Supreme Court order for the lower court here to transfer the venue of the hearings. Judge Benjamin Turgano sent the records to Manila on June 19, more than a month after the Supreme Court's first division granted the petition of the victim's widow, Alma, for a change of venue. Since Mariano was gunned down on July 31, 2004, no arraignment of the suspects, SPO4 Apolonio Medrano and Basilio Yadao, has been held. The two are awaiting an order for their transfer from the provincial jail to Manila.

Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Beached whale dies

CABANGAN, Zambales—A pilot whale that beached on the shore of Barangay Laoag here died on July 11. Fishermen found the 4.5-meter whale (*Globicephala melaena*) moaning while swimming toward the beach, said Abraham Pablico, deputy district officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Pablico said the fishermen described the whale as weak and tried to push the 800-kilogram whale into deeper water but it returned to the beach. A team of scientists from Ocean Adventure at the Subic Bay Freeport tried to revive the whale but failed.

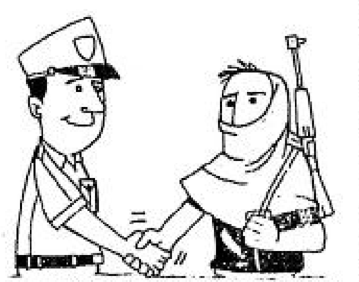
Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk

BIR man loses tax take

SORSOGON CITY—Three armed robbers took some P205,000 in tax collections from an employee of the Bureau of Internal Revenue's District Office here on Thursday. The victim, Rina Daymon-Bernardo, told police that the men accosted her after she alighted from a tricycle in front of the BIR office in Barangay Polvorista at about 2:30 p.m. She said two of the robbers poked handguns at her head and demanded that she hand over her collections, representing documentary taxes and certification fees. The robbers fled on a motorcycle.

Bobby Q. Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rebels bag alleged rapist-killer



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANTHONY MISJADES

MALAPATAN, Sarangani—Moro rebels have captured an alleged serial rapist-killer in Barangay Sapu Masla here on Thursday. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Commander Boral immediately turned over Tony Peralta, 25, to Gov. Miguel Dominguez. Peralta was being hunted by authorities in nearby Glan town for alleged involvement in several rape and homicide cases. When the MILF learned that Peralta was hiding in Sapu Masla, it launched a manhunt. The MILF has signed an agreement with the government to help in anticrime operations in areas where it maintains a presence as part of its efforts to boost the peace process.

Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

OIC postpones Jeddah meet

COTABATO CITY—The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has postponed a tripartite meeting tentatively set in Jeddah and aimed at ironing out kinks in the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). It cited its busy schedule for the postponement. The meeting was called after OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu commented during the pan-Islamic body's summit in Baku, Azerbaijan last month that the accord was a failure. The OIC said it wanted to help address any loophole that continued to hinder the successful implementation of the pact, which ended the MNLF rebellion after 20 years. The MNLF has complained that the lives of its members have not improved and that development was slow in its communities.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

OFW appeals for return of passport

DANILO Mallari, 38, of San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga lost his Philippine passport (HH 821648) on July 5 in San Fernando, Pampanga when he was applying for a driver's license at the local Land Transportation Office. Mallari, a technician in Saudi Arabia, is asking kind hearted people to return his travel document so he could go back to his work. He can be contacted at 0919-2752923 or at his address at 127 San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga.

Quezon cops lack guns vs NPA

LUCENA CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's marching order to the Philippine National Police to conduct full offensives against New People's Army rebels has been met with cynicism by the police corps of Quezon province, a known stronghold of communist insurgents in Southern Tagalog.

"That order is a big joke. How can we conduct offensives against the enemy when most of us do not even have government-issued guns? And for those fortunate to have received one, most of the time, they are the ones who buy their own ammunitions," a junior police official assigned in the Bondoc Peninsula told the INQUIRER.

The official requested anonymity for fear of reprisal from his superiors.

"Not having a service firearm is common among rookies but there are also others who have spent quite a number of years in the service but still don't have government-issued guns," he claimed.

"The reality here is that one still needs to pull strings in order to have a service firearm. And we're here in Quezon where the NPA abounds," the policeman lamented.

A rookie policeman stationed in one of the island-town police stations also disclosed the same predicament.

"We could not even conduct target shooting practice. We have to save precious bullets for any eventuality," said the policeman, who also requested anonymity when interviewed by the INQUIRER at provincial police headquarters in Camp Nakar here.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has said that policemen have been the major suppliers of firearms of its military wing, the NPA, as a result of raids on remote headquarters and "agaw-armas" operations.

Police provincial director Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan Jr. acknowledged the shortage of firearms and communications equipment among the ranks of his policemen.

"It's the bitter reality that the national police officials are now trying to address," Caragan said.

He explained that with the expected infusion of fresh funds from the national government to upgrade the armories of police stations across the country, the NPA rebels would now think twice before attacking policemen.

"In the next few months, we expect the arrival of additional firearms, communications equipment and police vehicles to bolster our men's combat capability," Caragan said.

Last week, the President signed Executive Order No. 546 ordering the PNP to actively support the Armed Forces of the Philippines in internal security operations.

Military and police officials set a short-term deadline to wipe out insurgency in critical areas of Northern Luzon and Southern Tagalog, specifically Quezon province. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Quezon village execs hesitant to join anti-NPA war

LUCENA CITY—THE ASSOCIATION of village chairs in Quezon province appeared hesitant to follow President Macapagal-Arroyo's order for the country's barangay officials to take an active role in the government's anti-insurgency operations.

"We have been discussing that situation long before President Arroyo issued her executive order, and the consensus of the organization was that of hesitance due to fear of personal and family safety," Quezon Board Member Noli Tan, president of the province's barangay league, said in a mobile phone interview.

.Quezon is widely known as a stronghold of the New People's Army. "Once we become totally involved in counter-insurgency operations, we will be facing a tremendous risk," Tan said.

Tan said that even if the government provided arms, most of the village officials would not be receptive to the idea.

"Providing us arms would only invite the other side (NPA) to visit us even in the dead of night," he said.

Tan said he would immediately call for another meeting in the light of the recent issuance of Executive Order No. 546 directing police and village officials to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the fight against insurgency.

"I understand that we have to follow the order as part of our responsibilities as government officials," Tan said.

He said the village officials would await the issuance of guidelines for the implementation of the executive order.

"We want to know from the DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) what sanctions will be imposed on those who will not follow the order," Tan said.

In an earlier interview, Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, who represents the Bondoc Peninsula, an NPA stronghold in the province, did not share Ms Arroyo's optimism that the insurgents would be wiped out in a couple of years.

The NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is estimated by the military to be 7,400-strong.

Suarez maintained that the ultimate defeat of the rebels lies on solving agrarian conflict in the country.

"As long as the agrarian issue is not settled, as long as there is a landed estate in the thousand of hectares, insurgency will never die," he said in an interview.

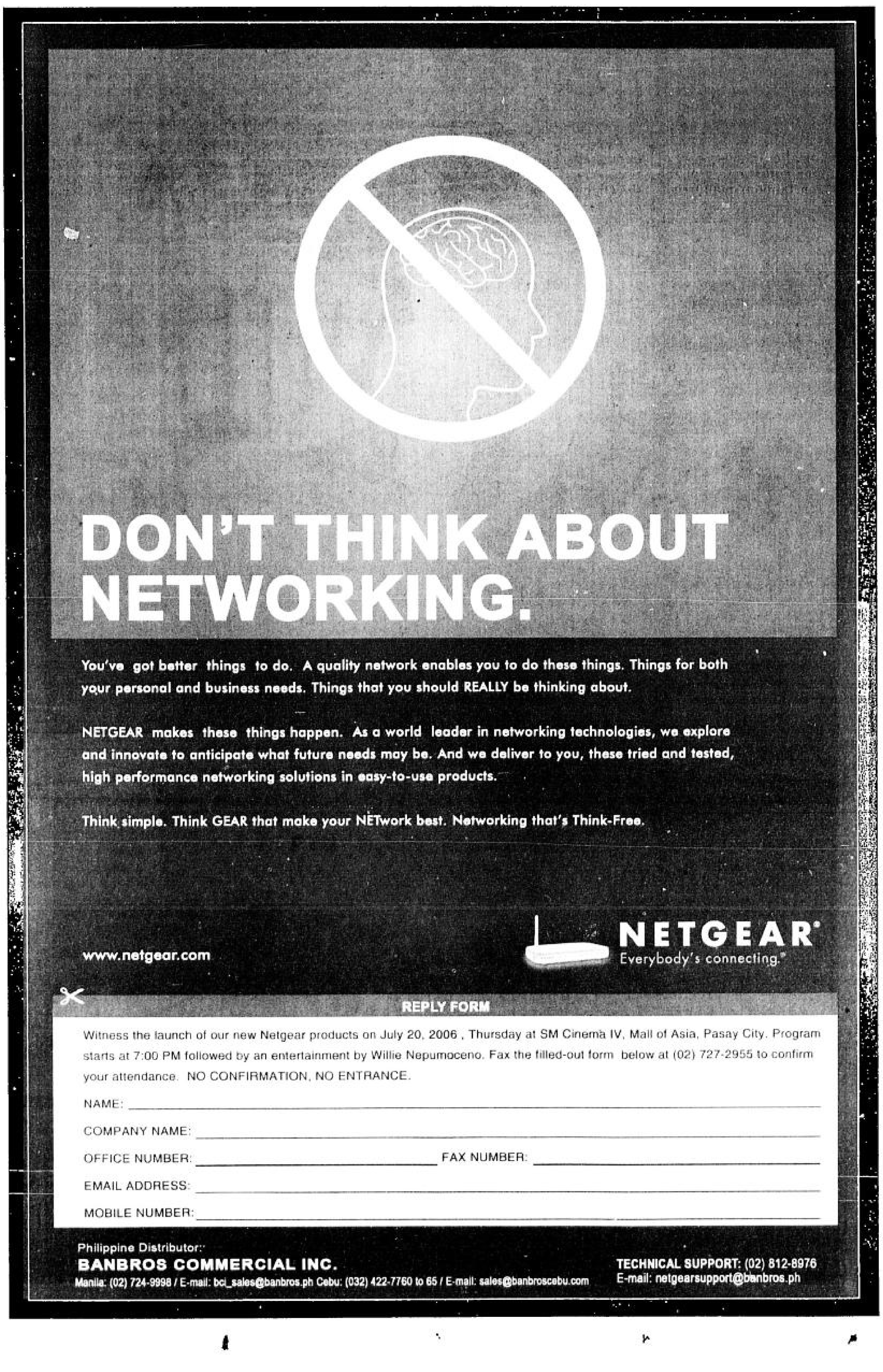
He said peace could not come from the muzzle of an M-16 rifle. "Military victory is not the answer."

Suarez said the government would only gain "temporary victory" with the P1-billion "all-out war" budget.

Quezon Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III, earlier said the "war and death fund" would only mean the escalation of killings, forced disappearances, more casualties and displaced families.

Tañada feared that his home province would be transformed into a battleground where only the people will lose, not only their homes and properties but also their lives and their families.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



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GMA flies to Libya for 3-day state visit

By Christine O. Avendano

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO BEGAN HER STATE visit to Libya yesterday, saying that she was looking forward to meeting Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi and seeking energy cooperation ventures with Tripoli.

According to a statement released by the Palace yesterday, Ms Arroyo is the first Philippine president to make a state visit to Libya in 30 years.

The President left for Libya from Brunei where she and other world leaders attended the 60th birthday of Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah.

Acknowledging the role that Libya played in the peace process in Mindanao, which eventually saw Manila forging peace with the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996, Ms Arroyo said Tripoli "wields a deep influence in the social and religious life of Muslim Mindanao and we see it as a liberating force to remove our people from the clutches of destitution and conflict.

"Col. Gadhafi and I share the same vision of a peaceful and prosperous world, and I look forward to meeting him personally at a time when we resolved to join hands in fighting terror and poverty not only in the Philippines but in our regional neighborhood," the President said.

"I aim to make our relations with Libya a key element in peace and development in Mindanao as we forge ahead with the "mega" regions that will carry the Philippines to first world status in 20 years."

Ms Arroyo was referring to the four provinces that represent the four "enlarged regional groupings" which Malacañang is planning to turn into "investment and development areas." These are North Luzon (which covers Regions 1, 2 and the Cordillera Autonomous Region, plus Aurora and Nueva Ecija), Metro Luzon (Regions 3, 4A and Metro Manila), Central Philippines (Regions 4B, 5, 6, 7 and 8) and Mindanao (Regions 9 to 13 and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao).

The President also said that her government intended to seek energy cooperation ventures with Libya.

"In a world of increasing resource constraints, we aim to secure Libya's assurance for oil supply at a 'friendly price,' especially in the event of market disruptions," Ms Arroyo said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President's trip to Libya had become "more relevant in our bid to ensure steady supplies and prices of imported crude oil."

He added that Ms Arroyo was grateful to Libya for supporting Manila's bid to attain an observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Ms Arroyo also said she would ask the Libyan government for more protection for the 8,000 overseas Filipino workers there.

GMA AND BOLKIAH President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is escorted by Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah during the banquet Saturday night in honor of the Sultan's 60th birthday celebration at the Istana Nurul Iman in Brunei Darussalam.

JERRY CARUAL

Asia, European countries hold interfaith meeting

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LARNACA—DESPITE SOME DISSENT, COUNtries across Europe and Asia adopted this month, an action plan to pursue interfaith harmony—deemed a borderless necessity since religion was constantly being used to justify violence.

Meeting in the sunny tourist district of Larnaca in the Mediterranean island country of Cyprus, some 200 government officials, religious leaders, academics and media practitioners laid down the Larnaca Action Plan on Interfaith Understanding and Cooperation for a Peaceful World.

The program emphasized the role of government, religious institutions, schools, the media, and the everyman in attaining global harmony among religions.

The document was the result of the three-day second Interfaith Dialogue of the Asia Europe Meeting (Asem). Delegates from 25-member states of the European Union and 13 Asian countries engaged in an informal process of dialogue to strengthen ties between the two regions in the aspects of economy, politics, culture, education and religion.

"We must translate theory into practical steps that will carry the results of our discussions beyond the walls of our conference rooms and into the daily lives of our people. The emphasis should be on the tangible, ongoing development of understanding and cooperation at street level," said Cyprus President Tassos Papadopoulos at the opening plenary on July 3.

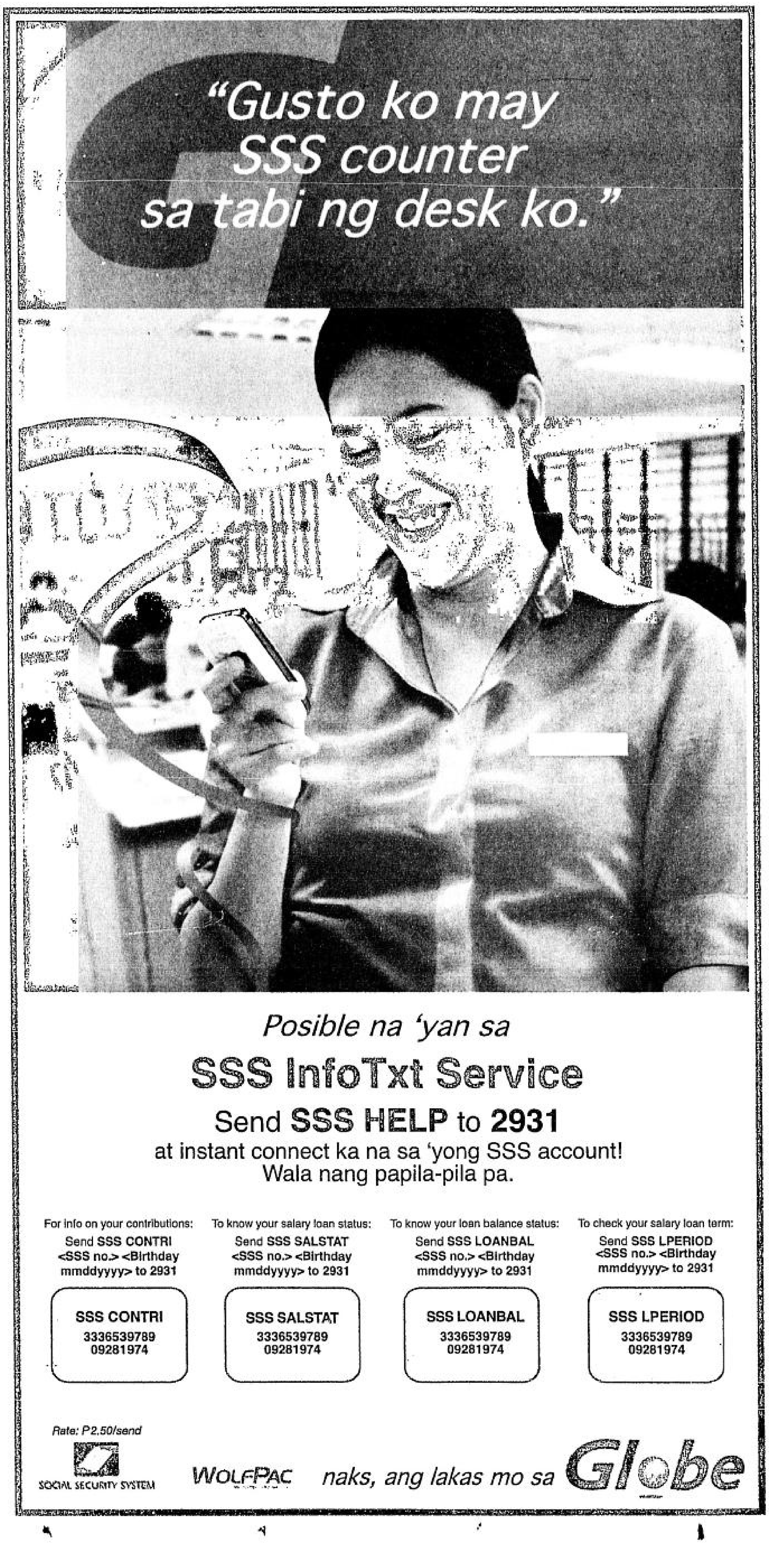
The dialogue was held just as the world prepared to mark the first anniversary of the July 7, 2005 bombings in London, where 52 people were killed and 700 were injured. The incident had been viewed as a consequence of religious radicalism.

"We can sit back and let [the increased contact peoples of diverse faiths and cultures] be exploited by radicals from all sides, used as a vehicle to promote their divisive agenda ... or we can harness its power, by actively promoting dialogue as a means of improving our mutual understanding," Papadopoulos told the delegates.

The action plan, a result of two days of meetings among separate working groups, contained 12 points tackling three aspects: interfaith understanding, the role of media in promoting interfaith harmony, and religion and the interaction within multi-ethnic societies.

Organizers considered the plan approved in the final plenary on July 5 even while some delegates stood to object, questioning what they called the lack of transparency in deliberations of the final drafting committee and the lack of democracy in the process of adopting it.

Members of the Philippine delegation felt there was "a problem of process" as the drafting committee no longer sought the vote of the plenary for the final version.



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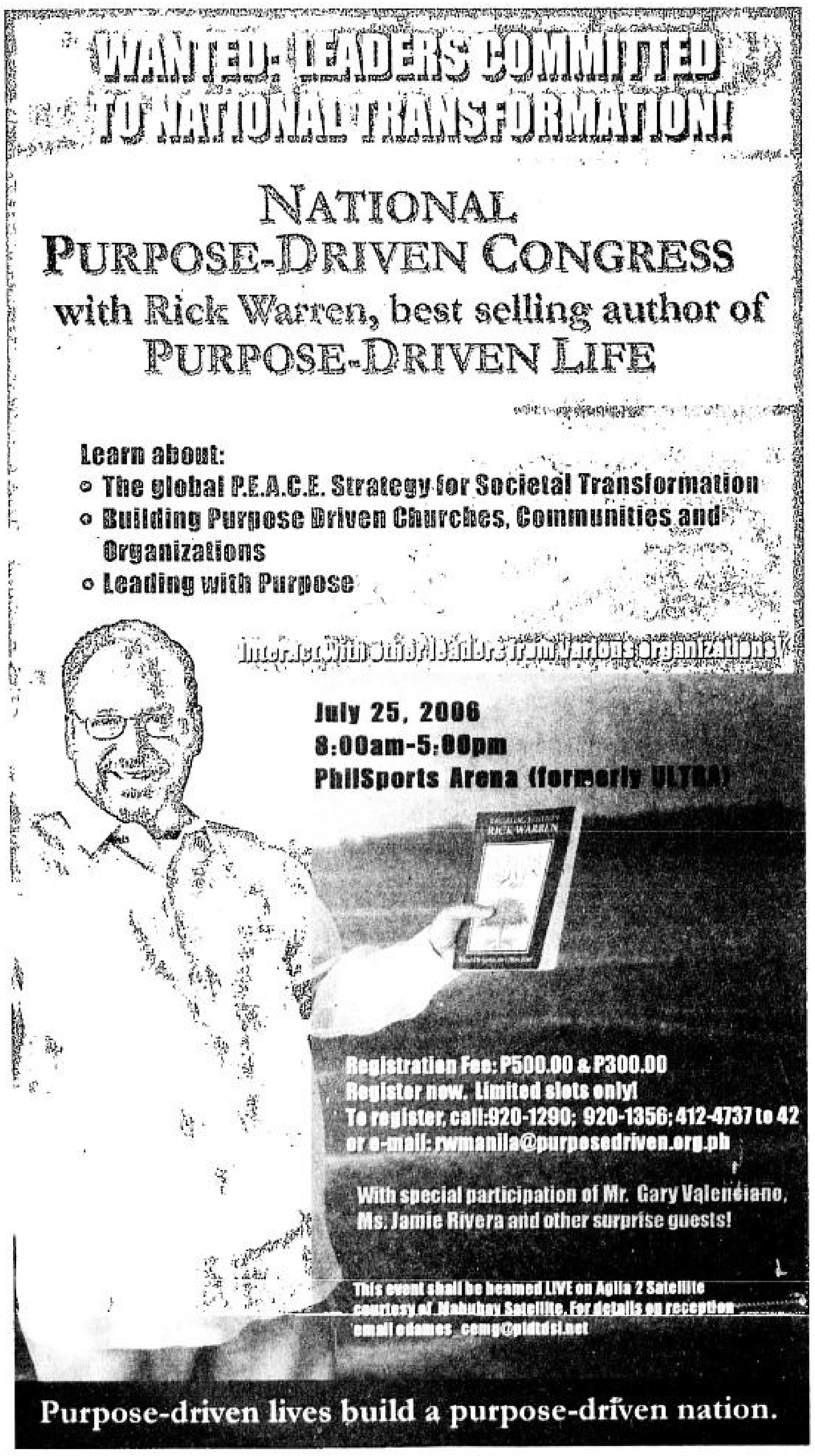

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NGO helps 'tarpaulin cases' start life afresh

Human trafficking victims undergo IT training

By Jocelyn R. Uy

INSIDE A SAFEHOUSE IN STA. ANA, MANILA, young girls are learning new skills that would provide them with a source of livelihood.

Once the training is completed, volunteers at the safehouse hope the girls can be safely introduced to the mainstream of society, without fear of being exploited by human traffickers.

Liza, 14, one of the girls inside the safehouse, recalled the day she became a "tarpaulin case."

A few years ago, she and 79 other young girls from Zamboanga del Norte were crammed into two jeepneys bound for Matnog, Sorsogon.

Liza said she was supposed to be in school that day, but because of her desire to help her family, she found herself inside one of the jeeps.

High-paying jobs

A few days before, a woman had gone to their town with the promise of high-paying jobs in Metro Manila.

Liza said she jumped at the chance of a better life for her and her family. On the day of their departure, she and the other girls got into two jeepneys that were to about to be loaded onto a barge bound for the Matnog port. From there, the woman told them they would be taken to the big city.

Just before the trip started, the woman warned the girls: If someone asks, lie about your age. She also told them not to make any noise during the entire trip.

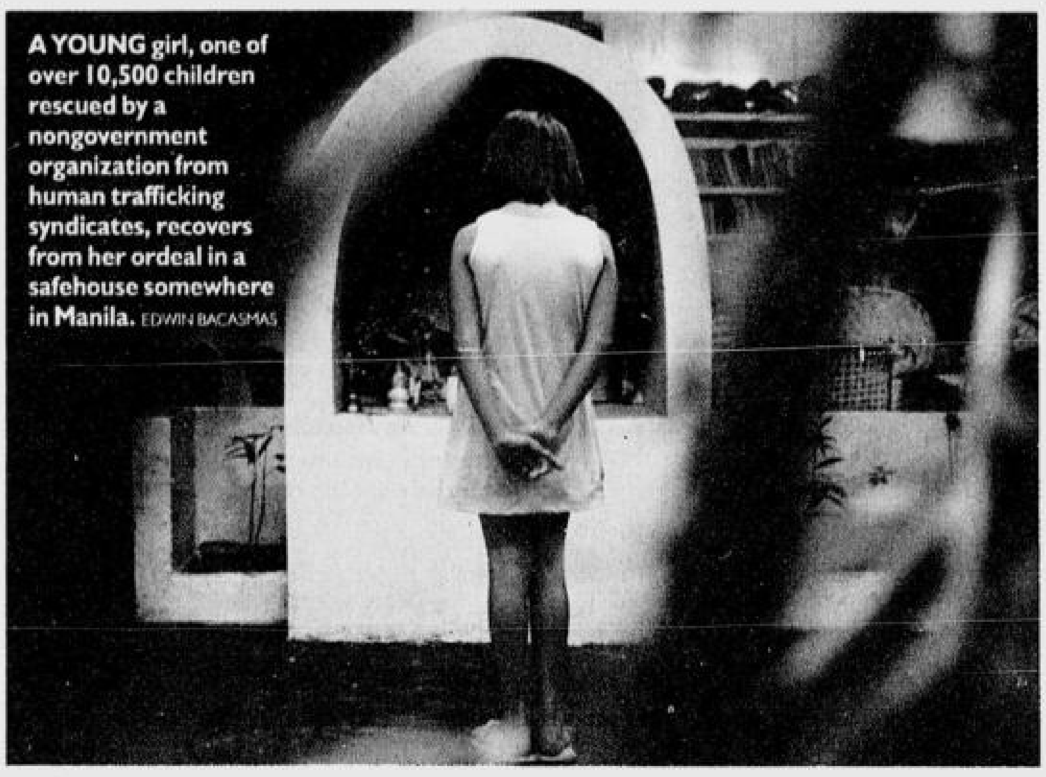
A pall of gloom descended on the children as the jeeps were covered with tarpaulin to hide them from prying eyes. In the next five days, they were only allowed to get out of the vehicle and stretch their legs three times—when the barge stopped over in Lipata, Sorsogon; Liluan, Leyte and Allen, Northern Samar.

The rest of the time, Liza and the other girls sat in the dark, taking in shallow breaths as they endured the stifling heat.

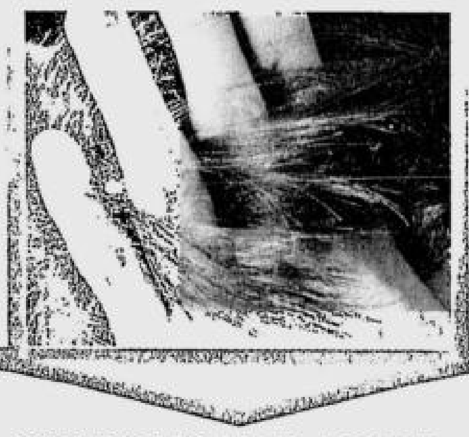
'Tarpaulin cases'

The girls had become "tarpaulin cases," among the numerous incidents of human trafficking in the country recorded by the Visayan Forum Foundation (VFF), a private organiza-

NGO HELPS/ A26



A YOUNG girl, one of over 10,500 children rescued by a nongovernment organization from human trafficking syndicates, recovers from her ordeal in a safehouse somewhere in Manila. EDWIN BACASMAS



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DRINK MODERATELY

Woman, 4 children killed in QC fire

By DJ Yap and Margaux C. Ortiz

A WOMAN DIED ALONG WITH her four children aged five to 13 years old in a fire in Quezon City early yesterday morning.

Killed were Isabelita Hortelano, 40 and her children Beatrice, 13; Enrico, 12; Bezalel, 7 and Geron, 5, said FO3 Rosendo Cabillan of the Bureau of Fire Protection-Quezon City.

Roberto, Isabelita's husband, survived and was taken to the hospital for the second degree burns he sustained when he tried to get into the burning house, the investigator added.

The two-hour blaze started at 2:15 a.m., originating from the living room of the bungalow-type house at 1530 Joshua St., Jordan Plains in Sta Monica, Novaliches, fire officials said.

It spread quickly, leaving no time for Isabelita and her children, who had been sleeping, to get out of the house, Cabillan said.

Roberto tried to enter the room to free his family but the door was shut tight. Responding fire fighters later stopped him from going further inside and took him to an unspecified hospital for burns in both arms.

Two other members of the household, Antonio and Remedios Gutierrez, both 78, the children's grandparents who had been staying with the Hortelanos, escaped unhurt, said SPO1 Marjeto Dayan of the Novaliches Police Station which conducted a parallel investigation.

Reaching the second alarm, the fire likely resulted from the short-circuiting of electrical outlets in the living room, said Cabillan.

A TV set and cellular phone charger had been plugged to the outlets when the fire occurred, he added.

The fire was put out at 3:38 a.m. No estimate of damages incurred was immediately available.

In Tondo, Manila, at least 400 families lost their homes in a fire that ravaged a depressed community the other night.

SFO2 Gaudencio Magallanes of the Manila Fire Department said the fire began at around 8:04 p.m. at the house of Antonio and Luz Solayao in Purok 2, Isla Puting Bato at Pier 2, North Harbor.

The fire soon reached Task Force Bravo and destroyed around 300 shanties, Magallanes said.

Resident Freddie Acuzar, 22, punctured his right foot and was immediately taken to the hospital for treatment.

Arson investigators are still determining the cause of the fire, which was put out at 10:57 p.m.

A MAN looks at all that remains of the house at 1530 Joshua St., Jordan Plains Subdivision in Novaliches after a fire broke out in the living room early yesterday morning. Five people, four of them children, were killed in the incident. RAFFY LERMA

NGO helps 'tarpaulin cases' start life afresh

From page A25

tion working for the welfare of marginalized migrants since 1991.

Luckily for Liza's group, a monitoring team of the VFF intercepted the two jeeps after the barge docked at the Matnog port.

The young girls, some of whom were already sick, were brought at once to the foundation's halfway house inside the port.

Liza told the VFF that they were only told about the real nature of the jobs that awaited them in the big city when they were already on the barge. A recruiter said they would be sent to work in brothels, bars, factories and even private households.

The 14-year-old teenager was among the 10,500 children the organization has rescued from illegal recruiters since it started its campaign against human trafficking in 2000. The most recent "tarpaulin case" uncovered by the VFF was four months ago, involving 29 young girls found inside a truck.

Tip of the iceberg

"But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Nobody knows how many children fall prey to illegal recruiters everyday since there are many other gateways that are left unguarded," said Ma. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, VFF president.

Only four (Manila, Batangas, Matnog and Davao) of the country's 123 ports are being monitored by their organization, Oebanda said. "We really can't do it alone," she admitted, adding that human traffickers were becoming more wily by the minute.

Information has reached the VFF that illegal recruiters are now using small boats to transport their victims, eluding monitoring mechanisms drawn up by government and nongovernment agencies in the ports.

Oebanda said the organization has yet to tap officials of the Manila International Airport Authority to help them intercept the "more organized and syndicated" human smuggling operations in airports.

RP taken off watch list

This even as the United States removed the Philippines from its human trafficking watch list recently after observing that the country had made "discernible progress" in combating human trafficking.

YOUNG girls staying in the safehouse undergo counseling as well as training on livelihood skills to prepare them for reintegration into society. EDWIN BACASMAS

The US State Department's 2006 Trafficking in Persons report also noted that the Department of Justice had tripled the number of prosecutors handling trafficking cases at the national level and had even assigned additional personnel to the provinces.

The VFF said many children and women still fall victim to human smugglers because of poverty, the scarcity of job opportunities, lack of education and the never-ending war in Mindanao.

These were the reasons given by 15 young girls, who now stay in the safehouse, after they were rescued from human traffickers.

Victims tell their story

Kathy, a 16-year-old girl from General Santos City, told a handful of reporters who visited them early this month that she was hired to work as a waitress in Manila. While in transit, she was notified by her recruiter that she would be working as a guest relations officer in some girly bar.

"I was lucky that people from the VFF were already keeping a watch at the port of Matnog," she said.

Another girl, 16-year-old Eloisa from Ilocos Sur, was lured by a woman who came to their neighborhood, offering her a job in a private household in Manila for P1,700 a month.

"I took that opportunity because I want to help my mother," she told reporters.

Her mother worked in the fields while her father was serving a murder sentence for murder at the national penitentiary.

Abusive employer

Everything went well for her until the day she and her employer's son were left alone in the house.

"He made me take off my clothes and took pictures of me on his cell phone," she sobbed, adding that there was also a time when the son invited over his cousins and friends. "They forced me to do things that I didn't want to do," she said.

Eloisa escaped and sought help from a barangay official, only to be sent back to her employer who beat her up for trying to escape. She had to be rushed to the hospital later for her injuries.

The VFF took her to the safehouse after the hospital informed them about her case.

"She is our bravest girl here. She is among the few victims who pursued a case against her recruiter," Oebanda told the INQUIRER.

Slow justice system

However, the slow justice system in the country has been one of the hurdles the organization faces in its battle against human trafficking. "The government should establish special courts to fast track these cases," she said.

Out of the thousands of children the organization rescued, only 20 of them went on to file a case in court. Only four of them have been given justice so far.

"As long as these people are not put in jail, children, young girls will continue to be victimized by human smugglers," Oebanda stressed.

LGUs should cooperate

What the organization needs now, she pointed out, is the cooperation of local government units.

She suggested that LGUs must take the initiative to pass a law requiring local police and officials to check all dubious vehicles plying their roads, especially those that are covered with tarpaulin.

The young girls at the safehouse may have to wait for several years in their search for justice. But the organization is aware that their dreams must not be put on hold.

"Apart from counseling, we provide them with informal and vocational training because we want them to invest in new skills while they are here," Oebanda explained. The girls undergo training in cosmetology, bag making, dressmaking and jewelry-making.

IT training

Meanwhile, Microsoft Philippines has tied up with the VFF to provide information and technology skills training to victims and vulnerable targets of human trafficking under the program Stop Trafficking and Exploitation of People through Unlimited Potential (step-UP).

"Through step-UP, we are taking a stand to help eradicate human trafficking and exploitation in the Philippines," Antonio Javier, managing director of Microsoft Philippines, said.

The two-year project would be carried out in three of the organization's centers—in Manila, Batangas City and Davao City—considered among the trafficking "hot spots" in the country.

With the booming technology industry, Oebanda said, the children would have a better chance of getting suitable jobs once they are reintegrated into society.

"No matter how dreadful these children's experiences are, they need not take desperate measures. We want to show them that there are other ways to cope," she said.

METROBRIEFS

Tow truck worker shot dead

A TOWING service escort was gunned down by two unidentified assailants before midnight Saturday in Quezon City. Joseph Magallanes, 35, of Phase 8-D Village 13, Bagong Silang, Caloocan City, died instantly after getting shot several times in the head and trunk, police said. Investigation showed that Magallanes was on board a towing truck with six other co-workers at about 10:45 p.m. when they chanced upon a red car parked along Belfast Avenue, Barangay Bagong Putik, Fairview. Since the hood of the car (unknown model and plate number) was open, Magallanes and his coworkers asked the men standing beside the car if they needed help, said case investigator PO2 Rodolfo Zulueta. Without a word, one of the men suddenly pulled out a handgun and shot Magallanes repeatedly, Zulueta said. The suspects, who remain at large, quickly boarded the car and sped away, police said. Magallanes' body was brought to the Philippine National Police crime laboratory for autopsy. The motive for his killing is still unknown.

DJ Yap

Atienza man to be charged today

CHARGES will be filed today against an assistant of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza who was accused of killing a jeepney driver Wednesday night in Tondo. "Based on my official findings, it's murder because of the element of treachery," said Chief Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling, chief of the Manila Police District homicide division. Apart from murder, suspect Noli Sugay will also be slapped with two counts of attempted homicide and illegal discharge of firearm, Yanquiling said, adding that the case will be filed before the Department of Justice. "We're filing it at the DOJ, if possible, first thing in the morning on Monday," he said in a text message sent to the INQUIRER. Sugay, one of Atienza's special assistants, was tagged by witnesses as the one who shot dead Aries Luriz, 27, of Coral Street, Tondo, over a petty traffic disagreement. Sugay, who remains under the custody of the MPD, voluntarily presented himself to MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong on Friday night.

Tina G. Santos

Donations sought for Malabon victims

THE PHILIPPINE National Red Cross is asking for donations for some 1,500 families who lost their houses when a fire broke out in Barangay Tonsuya, Letre, Malabon on July 10. The PNRC, through its chair Richard J. Gordon, has already distributed to some of the families relief goods. Emiline B. Muli of the PNRC Caloocan chapter also mobilized their volunteers to provide medical aid to the victims. Those who want to help can visit the PNRC national office on Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila or call 5270000 and 5275654.

DID YOU KNOW

THE PHILIPPINE Normal University (originally called the Philippine Normal School) was created by Americans in January 1901 through Act No. 74 of the Philippine Commission. It opened formally in September of that year as an institution for training teachers. Through the years, it has expanded by establishing branches in four provinces (Agusan del Sur, Isabela, Negros Occidental and Quezon). It was also designated as a Center of Excellence in English, Filipino and Values Education. Because of this, the PNU developed English and Filipino textbooks, and teachers' manuals for use in public elementary and secondary schools nationwide. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 004-06

The METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT (MRWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project : PPS TRANSFORMER PLATFORM, PERIMETER LIGHTINGS & FENCING
Location : PASLANG PUMPING STATION, SALOCON PANITAN, CAPIZ
Brief Description : CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS
Approved Budget for the Contract : Php 3,388,170.00
Source of Funding : PROJECT EQUITY BY ADMINISTRATION
Contract Duration : 60 CALENDAR DAYS
Delivery Period : 60 CALENDAR DAYS

The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check, will be opened. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Advertisement	July 14-28, 2006
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 31 - Aug. 4, 2006
3. Pre-bid Conference	Aug. 7, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.
4. Pre-qualification Conference	Aug. 14, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.
5. Deadline for Submission of Bids	Aug. 14, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.
6. Opening of Bids	Aug. 14, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.
7. Bid Evaluation	Aug. 16, 2006
8. Post-qualification	Aug. 18, 2006
9. Notice of Award	Aug. 21, 2006

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,500.00 to the METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) GONZALO GLEN B. DELGADO
BAC Chairman

(PDI - July 17 & 24 2006)

QC riot police all set for anti-Sona rallies

By Margaux C. Ortiz

UNRULY RALLIES DURING President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (Sona) next week? Bring it on.

Members of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD), who will be in charge of keeping anti-Sona protesters under control, topped the National Capital Region Police Office's (NCRPO) civil disturbance management competition held at the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park, Manila yesterday morning.

Representatives from the Eastern Police District's civil disturbance management (CDM) unit came in a close second while the Northern Police District team ended up in third place, according to NCRPO Director Vidal Querol.

He added that the NCRPO holds CDM competitions twice a year: Once in April to prepare for the big Labor Day rallies and another in July for the Sona demonstrations.

"This would enable our policemen to preserve their skills in crowd management and control, and update their knowledge on human rights," Querol said in a phone interview.

The NCRPO chief said QCPD emerged as the champion because its members were able to present solutions to problem-solving scenarios.

"They were quick to move and reorganized their unit fast, keeping their formation intact at all times," Querol said of the QCPD team.

The NCRPO chief emphasized the importance of keeping the formation whole, adding that many of the policemen belonging to other districts were captured by mock protesters.

Querol also said that their newly painted antiriot equipment earned big points for the QCPD team.

The Manila Police District (MPD), which topped the competition last April, placed fourth.

Elite cop unit pulling out

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MEMBERS OF AN ELITE POLICE unit would soon be pulled out from the country's financial center to augment government forces tasked to battle insurgents.

Some 100 members of the Philippine National Police Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) deployed in Makati City would be pulled out anytime this month for their new assignment, National Capital Region Police Office Director Vidal Querol said.

"They would be leaving because the SAF is now reconfiguring in light of the previous announcement that the PNP would be joining the operations to [quell] insurgency," said Querol.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had earlier announced that the government would engage in an all-out war against insurgents and allocated a P1 billion fund for the undertaking. Besides the military, the PNP was also tapped to help in the counterinsurgency campaign.

The PNP-SAF members were first deployed in Makati in September 2003 as the police's response to a bank robbery staged in the heart of the business district a month earlier.

"They (police) told me that they are not doing that much in Makati. I will talk with security managers in Ayala (Makati's prime commercial district) to ask if there would be additional security requirements as soon as we pull out the SAF," Querol told the INQUIRER.

He added that he would look into the possibility of having other policemen fill the security gaps the SAF pullout might create.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, meanwhile, said the presence of SAF operatives has been a vital deterrent to criminality in the city.

"The pullout would not be good for the city because their presence here helps avert crime incidence," he said.

India puts off peace talks with Pakistan after blasts

NEW DELHI—INDIA HAS PUT OFF peace talks with Pakistan due this week after suspicion for carrying out the Bombay (also known as Mumbai) train bombings fell on Islamist militants based in that country, a top Indian foreign ministry official said on Sunday.

The decision came days after a series of bomb blasts in commuter trains in the country's financial and entertainment hub killed 181 people and injured nearly 900.

Although there has been no breakthrough yet in investigations into one of India's worst terror attacks, officials suspect Pakistan-based Islamist militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Pakistani military spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, to be behind the bombings.

"We told them the environment is not conducive," said the Indian Foreign Ministry official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He was referring to talks due to be held in New Delhi on July 20-21.

There was no immediate reaction from Pakistan.

Before the blasts, Islamabad confirmed its participation. Islamabad has said the talks between the nuclear-armed neighbors "must be continued and carried forward."

Security forces have traced up to 70 calls made from Bombay to Pakistan, the Gulf and Bangladesh immediately before and after the attacks, the Daily News and Analysis (DNA) newspaper reported Saturday.

The blasts were the worst terror attacks in India since 1993 when 257 people died in a string of bomb attacks blamed on underworld figures and Islamic militants.

The meeting between their chief foreign ministry officials was to have reviewed progress in the peace process, launched in early 2004 after the nuclear-powered rivals went to the brink of a fourth war in 2002.

The decision to put off the talks, however, did not mean that the peace process had been called off, the official said.

"We are still committed to making peace with them. But they have to show that they can keep their promises to end terrorism before we can move forward," he said.

The official was referring to a pledge by Islamabad made in 2004 that it would not allow its territory to be used by anti-Indian militants fighting against New Delhi's rule in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

Pakistan has denied any connection with the Bombay bombings and said Indian charges against its military spy agency were nothing more than propaganda or speculation unless New Delhi came up with evidence.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has offered Islamabad's full cooperation into any investigation by India, wherever it should lead.

250 rounded up

Indian police meanwhile rounded up 250 people Saturday as part of a huge intelligence trawl but named no suspects for the Bombay train attacks.

Senior officers said "many hundreds" had been picked up since Tuesday's rush-hour blasts with most released after questioning amid growing pressure on police to make arrests over the case.

The latest swoop was centered on an area populated by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants but only 11 were held for further questioning, police told reporters.

One Bombay railway station was cleared Saturday after an anonymous caller warned a bomb had been planted but police branded it a hoax after a search.

The carnage has prompted Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to press leaders of the Group of Eight nations for greater cooperation in fighting terrorism in South Asia. Singh meets leaders at the G8 summit in St. Petersburg on Monday.

Bombay-based activists from the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (Simi) are also suspected of having a role in the attacks but both Lashkar-e-Taiba and Simi have denied any part in the blasts.

Three men have been the focus of media speculation including one accused of involvement in bombings in New Delhi last year that left over 60 dead and two others who fled the country after an explosives seizure near Bombay in May.

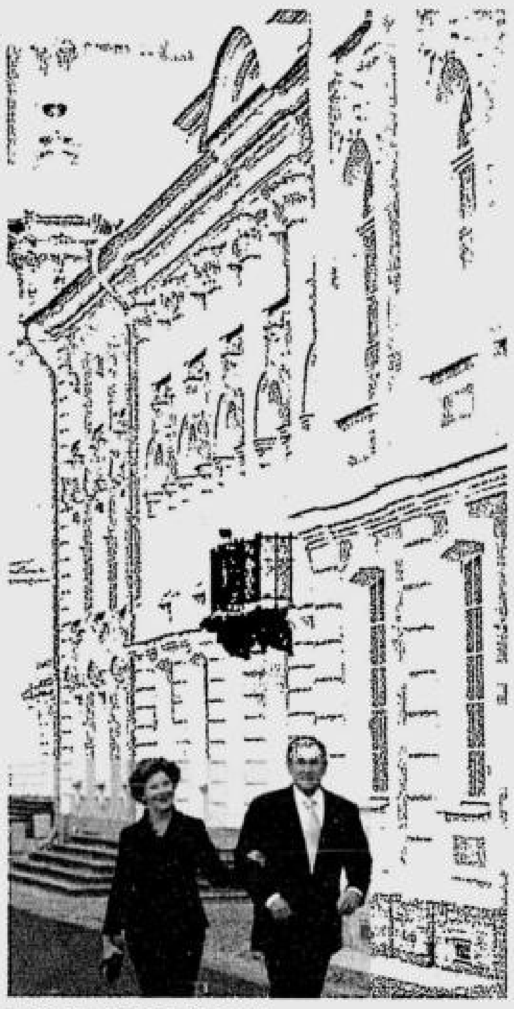
But Bombay police commissioner A.N. Roy said the inquiry team was still sifting through large numbers of potential suspects for the attacks which injured 890.

"They are under the scanner. We're looking at many, many people," he said. He was unable to give exact numbers.

Seven blasts went off in 15 minutes along Bombay's western railway line, tearing open first-class train carriages packed with rush-hour commuters.

Two-minute silences and religious ceremonies will be held next Tuesday at the blast sites at the exact moment when each bomb went off, an official said.

Reuters, AFP



BUSHES IN RUSSIA
US President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, arrive at the Peterhof for cocktails and dinner as guests of Russian President Vladimir Putin during the G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, July 15. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Russia stumbles in bid to join WTO

STRELNA, Russia—President Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin announced that they had failed to come to an agreement on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, and aides said the deal, which had been expected as early as this weekend, was not likely for months. At a news conference that offered a slightly rocky prelude to the annual summit meeting of the Group of 8 economic powers, Putin and Bush also differed over Iraq, the state of Russia's democracy and Israel's military campaign in Lebanon. Though they had a few positive announcements as well—agreeing on initiatives to combat nuclear terrorism and share civilian nuclear material and technology—overall the appearance highlighted growing tensions between former Cold War rivals now jockeying for global position. ***NYT***

Indonesia records another bird flu death

JAKARTA—A 44-YEAR-OLD INdonesian has died of bird flu, the health ministry said Sunday. The man died on July 12 at a hospital in East Jakarta and tests by the health ministry found he had the deadly H5N1 virus, said health ministry official Joko Suyono. "The man had a history of contact with chicken," he told AFP. If confirmed by a laboratory approved by the World Health Organization (WHO), the man's death would bring the country's bird flu death toll to 42, equaling Vietnam. ***AFP***

Coalition forces launch big attack in Afghan south

KABUL—US, British and Canadian troops launched a pre-dawn offensive against Taliban guerrillas in Afghanistan on Saturday, taking control of a southern district from militants and their drug-gang allies. The attack was part of a big offensive foreign troops have launched in response to the most intense phase of violence by a resurgent Taliban across the south. The surge in violence comes as a Nato peacekeeping force prepares to take over in the south from a US-led coalition force at the end of the month. At least 10 Taliban were killed as the coalition troops moved into the Sangin district of the southern province of Helmand on Saturday in a an offensive spearheaded by mechanized units and helicopter-borne troops, a force spokesperson said. ***Reuters***

British soldier dies in Iraq

BASRA, Iraq—One British soldier was killed and another wounded during an operation to seize a suspected "terrorist" in Iraq's restive southern city of Basra early on Saturday, the British military said. British military spokesperson Maj. Charlie Burbridge said two British soldiers were wounded when they came under small arms fire. They were evacuated to hospital where one later died. ***Reuters***

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UN Council slaps sanctions on N. Korea

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL voted unanimously on Saturday for a resolution requiring nations to prevent North Korea from obtaining dangerous weapons and demanding Pyongyang halt its ballistic missile program.

North Korea immediately "totally rejected" the resolution.

Its UN Ambassador Pak Gil Yon told the council that Pyongyang's missile development preserved a balance of forces in Northeast Asia and test launches would continue.

"It is clear to everyone that there is no need for the DPRK to unilaterally put on hold the missile launches under such a situation," Pak told the council following the vote, using the acronym for his country's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The resolution requires all UN member states "in accordance with their national legal authorities" to prevent imports and exports of any material or funds relating to the reclusive Communist nation's missile programs or weapons of mass destruction.

It demands North Korea "suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program," and reestablish a moratorium on the launching of missiles.

The 15-member Security Council had wrangled for 10 days over the response to North Korea's multiple missile launches on July 5. One of those included a long-range Taepodong-2 missile, which could theoretically hit the continental United States but fell into the Sea of Japan.

The Security Council was divided until hours before the vote over inclusion of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which allows for military force if another specific resolution is adopted.

China had threatened to veto the measure if Chapter 7 were mentioned, recalling the US-led invasion of Iraq that did not receive specific council authorization.

Consequently, Japan, the United States, Britain and France had no choice but to drop the phrase. But they still considered the language of the resolution tough and binding.

Whether Pyongyang sees it that way is another story.

North Korea could respond with another missile launch or possibly even conduct a nuclear test to show the world it is undaunted and undeterred, said Paik Hak-soon who heads North Korea studies at the Sejong Institute, a national security think tank near Seoul.

North Korea has enough nuclear material to make as many as 13 atomic bombs, according to one recent study.

"But it is unlikely that the North will exhaust those cards too early," Paik told Reuters in Seoul. "Despite being psychologically cornered and on the defensive, Pyongyang probably sees the resolution largely as a political, diplomatic move—something (US President George W.) Bush and Japan joined hands to accomplish, but does not bear much substantive effectiveness that did not exist before." *Reuters*

Bush, US Senate headed for stem cell showdown

WASHINGTON—BEFORE SEPT. 11 changed everything, President Bush wrestled publicly with the issue of embryonic stem cell research, then opened the door to federal financing for the science in the first major decision of his nascent administration.

Now, five years later, the stem cell debate is about to thrust Bush into a decision that could lead to another first for him: a legislative veto.

On Monday, the Senate will take up a measure approved by the House that would loosen the carefully calibrated research restrictions that Bush outlined on Aug. 9, 2001, in his first prime-time television address to the nation. If the bill passes, as expected, Bush says he will veto it, making good on a promise he made five days after that televised speech from his ranch in Crawford, Texas.

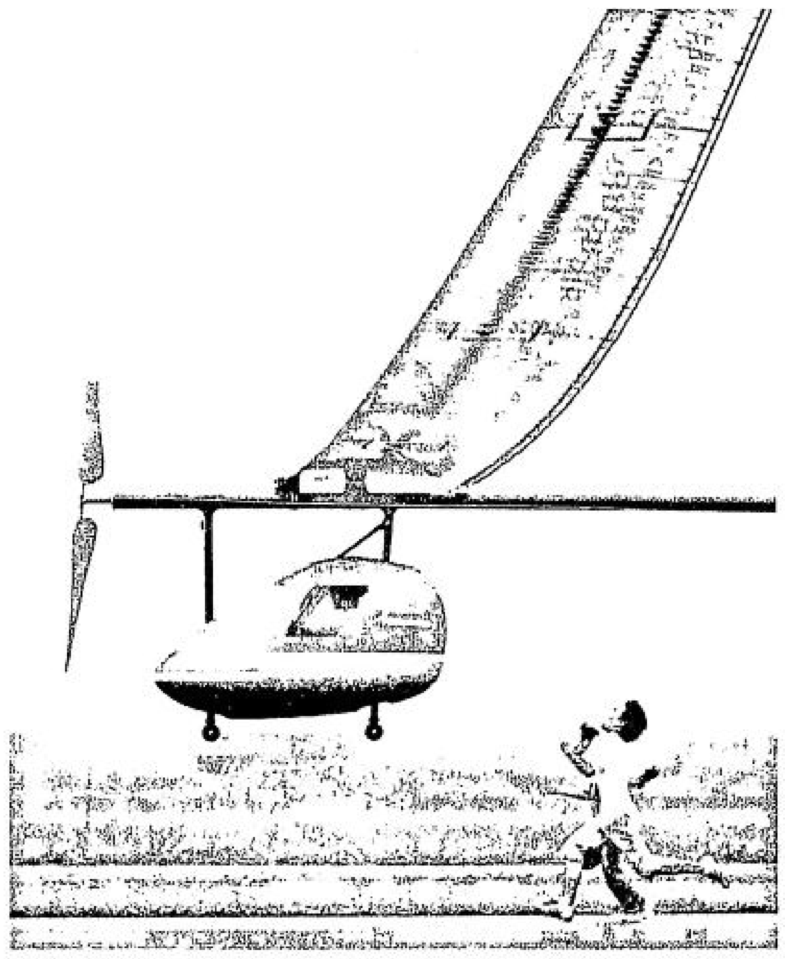
Bush's chief political adviser, Karl Rove, reiterated the veto threat last week. That keeps Bush in good stead with the religious conservatives who make up an important part of his base, but at odds with other leading Republicans, including Sen. Bill Frist, the majority leader, who is a heart-lung surgeon and has pushed to bring the measure to a vote.

The bill would expand Bush's policy by allowing the government to pay for studies on stem cell colonies, or lines, derived from embryos that are in cold storage at fertility clinics and scheduled for destruction. The current policy allows financing only on lines created before Aug. 9, 2001, Bush has said, so as not to encourage further destruction of embryos.

Polls show that a majority of Americans support the research, and stem cells already figure prominently in several key races, among them a hard-fought reelection battle by Sen. Jim Talent, R-Mo., who opposes a state ballot initiative to protect the research and plans to vote against the Senate bill.

Nancy Reagan became an advocate for the research while caring for her husband, the late former President Ronald Reagan, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. The former first lady called undecided senators last week to urge them to vote for the bill. While supporters say they have the 60 votes needed for approval, they are trying to secure 67, the number necessary to override a veto.

Whether they will succeed is unclear. *NYT*



FIRST BATTERY-POWERED PLANE
A manned aircraft powered by Panasonic's "Oxyride" batteries flies at Okegawa Airport in Saitama, Japan, July 16. Panasonic succeeded in its world's first manned flight powered by 160 dry cell batteries. The plane soared 5.2 meters above ground, stayed on the air for 59 seconds and covered a distance of 391 meters. REUTERS

Despite high fuel costs, US keeps on trucking

NEW YORK—SOARING FUEL costs have so far failed to dampen US enthusiasm for hitting the road in summer.

In fact, gasoline demand neared an all-time high around the weekend ahead of the July 4th Independence Day holiday, according to official data.

Analysts say US families have been able to absorb the higher fuel costs without making changes to their lifestyles.

"The American consumer's demand for gasoline is insatiable," said Jason Schenker, Wachovia Securities, who noted only modest changes in auto preferences of US motorists.

"Sure, traditional mammoth sport utility vehicle (SUV) sales are hurting but cross-over utility vehicle (car-based SUV) sales are strong. Essentially Americans have made their choice: big vehicles with big gasoline bills."

Department of Energy data showed US gasoline demand for the week to July 7 was 9.621 million barrels per day. The prior week, demand was at 9.65 million barrel per day, the second highest on record.

US driving habits have been little changed even though pump prices have risen nearly 30 percent from a year ago. The American Automobile Association said average gasoline prices have risen to $2.963 per gallon (3.78 liters), near the all-time high after Hurricane Katrina struck on Aug. 29 last year.

Analysts say that part of the reason the United States has adjusted to high prices is that economic growth is rising as well.

"Despite higher prices for oil, the bulk of Americans and the world for that matter seems to be adjusting to higher prices," said Phil Flynn, a dealer at Alaron Trading. *AFP*

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Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee I (BAC 1), invites Suppliers/ Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

LOT NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION/ OPENING OF BIDS
1	Rice (Best Quality)	P2,023,500.00	P1,500.00	July 17 to 21, 2006	July 25, 2006	August 8, 2006
2	Ink and Ribbon Cartridges for 3rd Quarterly Stock	498,867.32	500.00	July 17 to 21, 2006	July 25, 2006	August 8, 2006

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility Check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00 a.m - 5:00 p.m.).

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's and Manager's Check in the amount of Twenty Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Five Pesos (P20,235.00) for Lot 1 and Four Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty-Eight Pesos and Sixty-Eight Centavos (P4,988.68) for Lot 2.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative's who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. (062) 991-1556
Email:
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) ARNULFO A. ALFONSO
BAC I Chairman

(PDI - July 17, 2006)

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METROPOLITAN CEBU WATER DISTRICT
Bids and Awards Committee

CARMEN BULK WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND CALL FOR REGISTRATION

The Metropolitan Cebu Water District ("MCWD") is inviting potential proponents/bidders/challengers to express their interest in the prospective solicitation of comparative or competitive proposals ("Swiss Challenge") to finance, design, construct, own, operate and maintain raw water abstraction, treatment and transmission facilities intended to extract and treat raw water principally from the Luyang-Cantumog River located in the Municipality of Carmen, Cebu Province, and deliver up to 46,000 cubic meters per day of bulk potable water through a transmission pipeline to the MCWD distribution system under a suitable public-private partnership agreement for a fixed concession period ("Project"). The Project is being developed and procured following the unsolicited proposal process prescribed under Republic Act No. 6957, as amended, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations ("BOT Law"). The original proponent of the Project, whose unsolicited proposal will be the subject of the Swiss Challenge, is the Ayala Corp./Manila Water Co./Stateland, Inc. Consortium

MCWD, through the BOT Center of the Department of Trade and Industry, has engaged the International Finance Corporation ("IFC") as its transaction advisor for this Project.

Pursuant to Section 4 of the BOT Law and Section 2.5 of its Implementing Rules and Regulations, all interested parties are asked to signify their interest and register as possible proponents/bidders/challengers by submitting to MCWD (copy furnished IFC), at the addresses indicated below, their letter of intent and company profile with the following information:

1. Name of proponent
2. Business address/tel. no./fax no./email address
3. Number of years in operation
4. Organizational and ownership structure
5. Field of specialization
6. Key personnel (corporate officers and key staff members)
7. List of completed projects (brief description, types of services, location, project cost/contract amount, implementation period, client) and
8. Latest audited fianancial statements (income statement and balance sheet).

All expressions of interest must be submitted on or before July 28, 2006. Duly registered proponents will be entitled to receive project updates from MCWD.

THIS INVITATION OR CALL FOR REGISTRATION IS NOT THE START OF THE FORMAL SOLICITATION OF COMPARATIVE/ COMPETITIVE PROPOSALS. The submission of expressions of interest is not a bidding requirement and will not qualify or disqualify potential bidders from participating in the Swiss Challenge.

More information regarding this invitation and call for registration may be requested from:

Sanjay Grewal
Advisory Services
International Finance Corporation
11/F Ayala Tower One
Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Phone. (852) 2509-8139 Hong Kong
(632) 848-7333 Manila

ARMANDO H. PAREDES
General Manager
Metropolitan Cebu Water District
Magallanes-Lapulapu Streets
Cebu City, Philippines
Phone (032) 256-0411
Email: gmo@mcwd.gov.ph

(Sgd.) NOEL R. DALENA
BOT-BAC Chairman

(PDI - July 3, 10 & 17, 2006)

WHAT'S INSIDE
Sy drops back to 3rd as Winslow prevails/A31

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Europe gets back at Asia in MVP Cup

By Musong R. Castillo

A DOUBLE WHAMMY.

Kennie and Kennevic Asuncion fell short in a classic encounter with a tall mixed Danish pair, and the Asian team that the Filipino crowd embraced as its own went down in defeat as Europe last night ruled the MVP Cup: Asia vs. Europe 2.

The Asuncions fought hard but still wound up with the short end of the stick, bowing to Thomas Laybourn and Kamilla Rytter-Juhl, 24-22, 17-21, 18-21, before Yao Jie's 21-19, 18-21, 21-11 mastery of Zhang Ning wrapped it up for Europe.

Yao's surprise domination of the world's top-ranked player in the ladies' singles meant that the two continents have now split the first two editions of this rich, Ryder Cup-style event.

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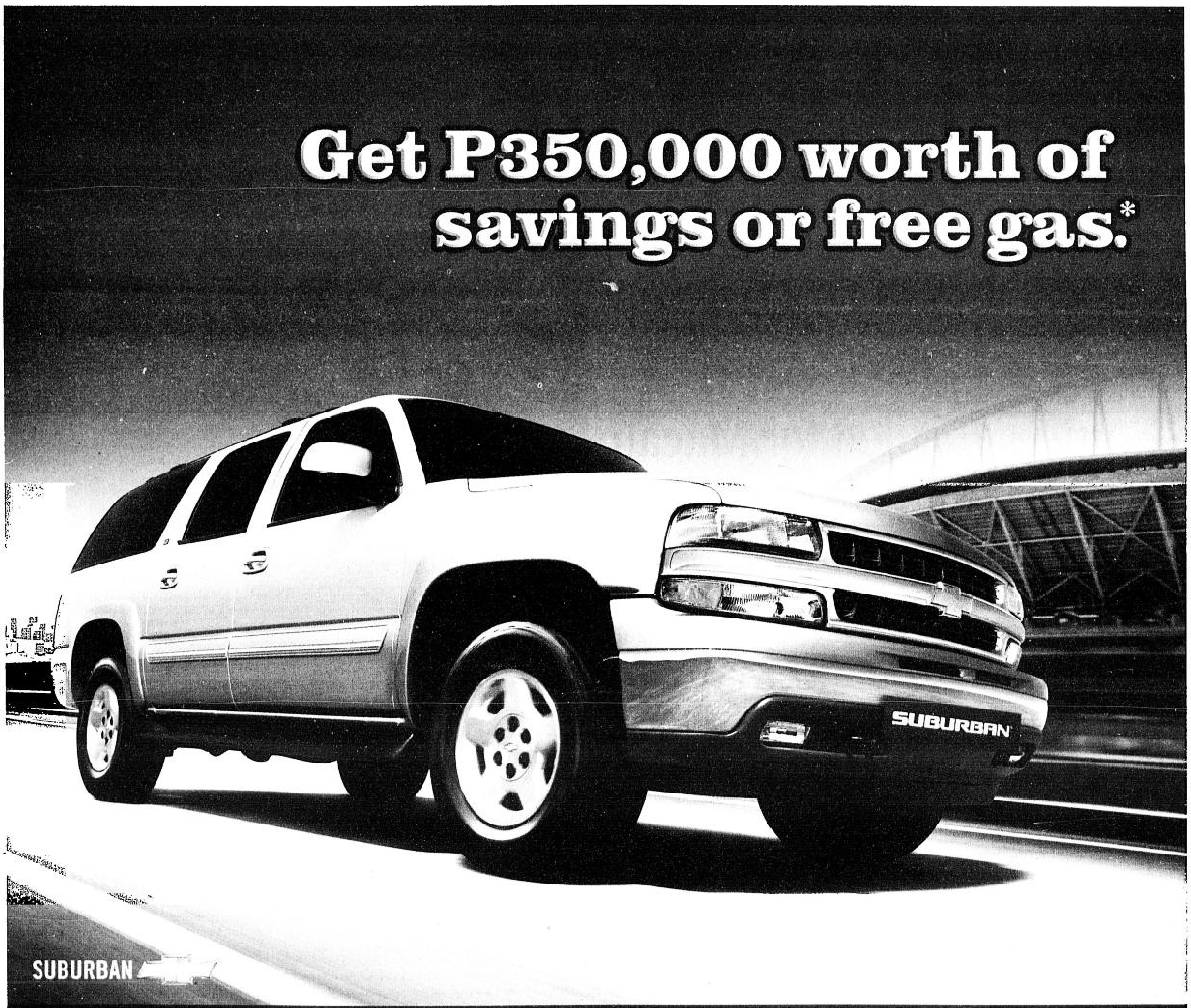

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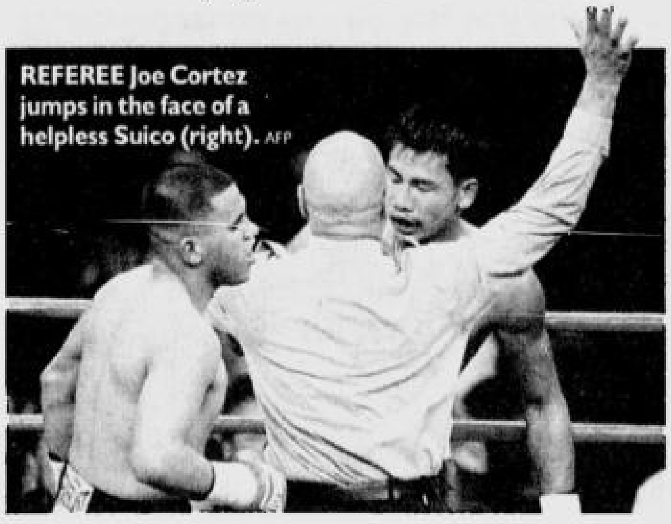
'Tough' Suico loses world title bid via 9th-round TKO


REFEREE Joe Cortez jumps in the face of a helpless Suico (right). AFP

LAS VEGAS—FILIPINO CHALLENGER RANDY Suico's hopes of becoming a world champion were dashed Saturday (Sunday in Manila), losing via a ninth-round technical knockout to WBA lightweight champ Juan Diaz at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

The Cebuano's vaunted power was no match to Diaz's superior technical skills as the methodical Mexican-American defended well and used a pricking jab to befuddle Suico.

Referee Joe Cortez stopped the fight in 2:06 of the ninth round, after the last of the Texan "Baby Bull's" countless combinations to Suico's head.

Diaz (30-0, 15 KOs), making his fifth title defense on the undercard of Shane Mosley's rematch with Fernando Vargas, moved adeptly and distributed patient punishment in just his third fight since January 2005.

The Texas native had a nine-month layoff caused by injuries and business problems before his unanimous victory over Jose Miguel Cotto in April.

'He was very strong'

"Suico was very tough," Diaz said. "He came to take my title, and he was very strong. He came out punching from the opening bell."

Suico (24-3) threw 840 punches but connected with just 15 percent, while Diaz landed 65 percent of his blows.

Suico absorbed plenty of punishment, but Diaz's lack of devastating punching power allowed the Filipino fighter to hang around for most of nine rounds *(See Bare Eye below)*.

Suico was knocked out for the first time in his career, showing even less power than Diaz. He was a late replacement on the card for Lakva Sim, who was beaten by Diaz in July 2004 to claim the World Boxing Association title.

The 26-year-old Suico, who was never in real trouble up to the stoppage, got a warning from Cortez in the fifth round for not increasing his punch output.

The Filipino's trainer, Juanito Ablaca, and manager, Joe Koizumi, assured Cortez that their ward was fine, and that Suico would continue fighting. *With reports from AP and Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Europe gets back at Asia in MVP Cup

From page A29

And more than the win, the early end to the war came as a surprise. So few of the experts gave Europe a chance owing to the Asians' firepower on paper.

The Asuncions' defeat and Yao's victory rendered the Lin Dan vs. Kenneth Jonassen match no bearing, but the Chinese ace still encountered a rough time against a foe he has beaten so many times in the past.

And if it was any consolation for the big crowd that came to the Araneta Coliseum, Lin and Jonassen provided one final piece to a day filled with thrills.

Lin, ranked world No. 2, dove hard to retrieve shots, smashed with a little bit more authority and played like he was completely at home in eking out a 21-13, 14-21, 21-14 win over the tough-as-nails Jonassen.

Still, the Lin victory that received a standing ovation from the crowd could not save Asia from losing the showdown, 10-8.

The win was worth $60,000 (about P3.15 million) for the European squad, with Asia settling for the $40,000 runner-up's purse.

The Asuncions whipped up the crowd into a frenzy, showing that they are truly world-class talents by brandishing a game that had their conquerors saying nothing but praises after the match.

"It was not easy for us," Rytter-Juhl said. "We knew that they would play well in their home court and we got nervous during the game.

"We played in a terrific atmosphere out there, it was much unlike in Denmark."

"They (Asuncions) played really, really good today," Laybourn added. "We got valuable tips from Gail (Emms, half of the team that also won out in three sets over the Asuncions last year).

"And she told us that your players were going to play fantastic today."

Kennie and Kennevic rallied from 5-10 down to win the first set, now showing awe and engaging the Danes to several long rallies.

The Filipino pair also saved one set point, when Kennie smashed a winner that Laybourn didn't even come close to retrieving. The siblings, ranked 21st in the globe, then won four of the last five points to close out the set in 17 minutes.

Europe started dominating the event from the second day on, with Jonassen getting the better of reigning world and Olympic champion Taufik Hidayat of Indonesia, 21-17, 17-21, 21-12.

Gail Emms and Dona Kellogg then came out and tore the the Saralee Thungthongkam-Sathinee Chankrachangwong tandem to shreds, 21-8, 21-15, a victory that gathered so much momentum for the Europeans it spilled all the way to the final day yesterday.

Asia had jumped to a 3-0 lead by winning all three matches on opening day and most everyone expected the Cup to be decided only in the final match with Zhang fancied to prevail over Yao.

"I feel very, very proud in defeating Zhang," the world's seventh-ranked Yao, who left her native China in 1990 to live in the Netherlands, said through an interpreter.

Yao's victory also avenged a first-day loss to Zhang, who actually won the final four points in the second set last night to forge a deciding set.

But Yao opened up with a 6-2 lead in the third and Zhang's points only came in trickles. The former member of the Chinese national team then turned up the heat some more from 10-5, winning seven of the next nine points for a 17-7 lead.

The event was presented by Smart Communications and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co, and sponsored by JVC, ABC 5, Nokia, Snickers, Information Gateway, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Toby's Yonex, Sunrise, the Philippine Star, Discovery Suites, California Pizza Kitchen and Gatorade.

DENMARK'S Thomas Laybourn and Kamilla Rytter-Juhl on the offensive against siblings Kennie and Kennevic Asuncion (bottom). AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Eagles soar as rookie shines

By Jasmine W. Payo

FRESHMAN GUARD ERIC SALAMAT fueled the Ateneo Blue Eagles' second-half surge to forge a 98-89 victory over the University of the Philippines Maroons yesterday in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Salamat, a sought-after rookie from the 2005 NCAA juniors champion San Sebastian, poured in 11 of his 17 points in the final two quarters to propel Ateneo on top with the University of the East at 2-0.

"He played an exceptional game," said Ateneo coach Norman Black of the 5-foot-11 guard. "He took advantage of his playing time."

Fifth-year forward Doug Kramer led the Eagles with a 20-point, 10-rebound performance.

The Adamson Falcons had an easier time in the first game as they dominated early for an 88-64 rout of National University Bulldogs.

Ken Bono and Patrick Cabahug, who combined for 42 points and 30 rebounds, built a cushion big enough to let the Falcons coast to their first victory in two games.

Salamat, who played only four minutes in his debut game versus NU, single-handedly towed the Eagles to a 73-69 advantage after a deadlock at 67 in the third quarter.

The scores:

First Game

ADAMSON 88—Cabahug 22, Bono 20, Orera 14, Agustin 8, Canuday 6, Yong 5, Hugnatan 4, Pacheco 3, Gonzalgo 3, Poloyapoy 2, Santos 1, Yambot 0, Gorospe 0, Basilio 0.

NU 64—Asoro 18, Lingao-Lingao 12, Jahnke 12, Catamora 10, Malagueno 5, Flor 3, Luy 2, Salvado 2, Garcia 0, Cooper 0, Malcontento 0, Fernandez 0, Dela Cruz 0.

Quarters: 24-8, 52-26, 72-43, 88-64

Second Game

ATENEO 98—Kramer 20, Salamat 17, Intal 13, Escueta 8, Tiu 8, Escalona 8, Al-Hussaini 8, Laterre 7, Arao 4, Quimson 3, Reyes 2.

UP 89—Cruz 29, De Asis 14, David 10, Serios 9, Epres 9, Co 8, Buyco 4, Maniego 2, Reyes 2, Braganza 2, Salvador 0, Cacha 0.

Quarters:30-30, 56-48, 77-71, 98-89

Shuttlers headed for Macau

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOR SOME OF THE WORLD-CLASS SHUTTLERS, THE MVP CUP 2 may have been nothing more than just a quick, profitable stopover before the "real destination."

The event, which assured all participants a share of the $100,000 purse, came a few days before the Macau Open, a prestigious five-star meet which stakes world ranking points and features bare-knuckled competition.

Indonesian Taufik Hidayat is listed in the men's singles, fueling wild speculations at the Big Dome that the World and Olympic champion pulled his punches in losing to Kenneth Jonassen last Saturday.

Hidayat, six-time Djarum Indonesian Open champion—one of the few six-star badminton tournaments in existence—is reportedly raring to gain in the world ranking after he slipped to 23rd following a string of injuries.

Joining him are the Asuncion siblings who will banner the 10-man RP national team flying to Macau tomorrow afternoon.

National team coach Errol Chan said this marks the first time the country will take part in the Macau Open.

"This is a very prestigious event where we get to see how we stand in the badminton world," said Chan.

Chan bared that Kennevic will be pitted against Malaysian star Hashim Hafiz, the current Philippine Open champion, in the first round of the men's singles.

Still, the RP mentor said the Asuncions got a better draw in the mixed doubles because of their world ranking (21st).

"They remain to be our biggest chance there," said Chan.

Also donning the RP colors in the Macau Open are Lloyd Escoses, Bogs Amahit, Christopher Flores, Jaime Junio, Rodel Bartolome, Ian Piencenaves, Wally Fernandez and Owen Lopez.

Ozamiz-Pagadian title series unwraps today

GAME TODAY (*Pagadian Gym*)
6 p.m.—Ozamiz vs Pagadian

PAGADIAN CITY—IT WILL BE hunger versus pride when expansion team Pagadian Explorers battle reigning titlist Ozamiz Cotta today at the start of the best-of-three 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national finals at the city gym here.

The match is set at 6 p.m.

The Cotta Shrine cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog is dead set to keep its image intact, while Pagadian is hungry to make an explosive debut in the tournament.

The Ozamiz squad and the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co finished the classification round 1-2. This is the first time two Southern division teams are disputing the plum because the format has been changed, allowing the top two northern and southern teams to meet in the crossover semifinals.

Ozamiz swept Batang Tagaytay, 2-0, while Pagadian came back from a 0-1 deficit to knock out Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque, 2-1, in the semifinals.

Knights try to defend clean slate against Altas

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	4	0
San Beda	4	1
PCU	4	2
Mapua	3	2
Perpetual	2	3
S Sebastian	2	4
St. Benilde	1	4
Jose Rizal U	0	4

GAMES TODAY
12 noon—Letran vs. Perpetual Help (Jrs/Srs)
3 p.m.—St. Benilde vs. Jose Rizal U (Jrs/Srs)

PEOPLE ARE LOOKING AT LETRAN differently now, after the Knights passed what amounts to a litmus test against Philippine Christian University last Friday. They're now seeing a team far different from the one ranked lowly in preseason previews.

I felt sad they ranked Letran [as low as] sixth in the preseason," said Letran coach Louie Alas. "On the other hand, I felt that it has been our motivation to play the best we can every game."

The Knights have squeezed four wins in four games out of that motivation and they try to make it five-for-five when they battle the Perpetual Help Altas at 1:30 p.m. today in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino stadium.

St. Benilde takes on JRU at 3 p.m. *Marc Reyes*

Mexicans rehearsing for Pacquiao-Morales III

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(SINCERE THANKS: To those who attended, offered speeches, prayers, drinks, and all sorts of kindness—mainly Dr. Ruel Reyes of ATR-Torres Wines and Spirits—despite the inclement weather, sincerest thanks from me and my family for the successful launching of "Pacific Storm-Dispatches on Pacquiao of the Philippines" at the National Bookstore, Shangri-La Plaza Mall last Thursday. Keep punching, dear friends.)

* * *

THERE WAS AN ECSTATIC YELP FROM THE crowd whenever Juan Diaz would rip at the gallant but outmatched Randy Suico yesterday at MGM Grand in Las Vegas, venue of Manny Pacquiao's past twin frustrations.

The cry rose to a piercing crescendo the moment referee Joe Cortez wrapped his arms around the dazed Suico to prevent the Filipino fighter from being irrevocably crushed.

This was late in the ninth round, after Suico swayed limbless, glassy-eyed to another solid combination.

Actually, Suico, often caught helpless against the ropes, could've gone down in any of the previous rounds.

But he just would not melt or crack despite terrible bombardment.

* * *

Of course, Suico was totally outclassed by the fierce, methodical Diaz, the Mexican-American who displayed the gifts and grit of a future Mexican ring great in the tradition of the great Julio Cesar Chavez.

"Suico, no good footwork, he did not use jabs to his advantage," advised writer Rogelio Ordonez, who watched the fight via cable at his place in Alapan, Imus, Cavite.

But Suico had no jab to speak of, the writer was advised, he was pushing, not snapping those limp jabbing attempts.

Diaz was not only rock-hard, he had a buzz-saw attacking style; but he remained calm and never rushed the execution.

Actually, Suico could have tried to fight from outside, but he just kept getting sucked into a furious tug-of-war inside, the champion's favorite turf.

* * *

All told, the conquest was doubly sweeter for Mexicans in the crowd who repeatedly issued vengeful shrieks over the Diaz triumph.

Mexicans at MGM yesterday could not help but see in Suico someone representing Manny Pacquiao, now the subject of combined ire and awe among the fans of Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera, who had both been crushed and humiliated by the RP boxing super hero.

You see, Mexicans had long been waiting to savor a full-fledged win over a ranked Filipino, following the incredible Pacquiao dominance of a slew of Mexicans, including his latest victim, former two-time world champ Oscar Larios.

* * *

The Diaz win over Suico hardly settled the issue, but Mexicans could not help but celebrate beyond the merit of yesterday's one-sided victory.

It was not even close, and those who knew their boxing were one in swearing that the challenger, except for a big fighting heart, was never in the league of the Mexican 135-lb king.

Maybe Mexicans felt yesterday it was their time to rehearse for a victory cry for the scheduled Nov. 18 rubber match between Pacquiao and Morales at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas?

At least, that's what Morales has been vowing to his countrymen—that he would strike back and emerge triumphant—for his third, and maybe final, encounter with Pacquiao.

You can bet Mexicans also welcomed the news of Pacquiao being rushed to the hospital on Friday for vomiting and stomach pains.

Anything that could diminish Pacquiao's fabled might and sharpness is expected to be welcome news among *paisanos* of both Morales and Barrera.

* * *

Pacquiao knows he would be carrying an immeasurable responsibility in his third clash with Morales.

On the other hand, you can bet a Morales revenge win over Pacquiao would result into a national day of redemption all over Mexico.

Morales has been bragging that he has finally found a fool-proof winning (*ganador*) formula against Pacquiao, as reported by the Bulletin's Nick Giongco quoting Mexican sources.

Morales has vowed to be a hundred percent in shape "to guarantee a win."

Of course, there will be no guarantee of victory for either Morales or Pacquiao.

Morales is coming wiser from defeat.

Pacquiao could enhance his chances if he stays on his toes, and brings in new might and skills based on what he has learned from his victory over Morales.

FORMER champion Pepon Marave (in yellow) confronts Dado Peña after both Filipinos spun out in the second lap.

Sy drops back to 3rd as Winslow prevails

GUANGDONG—BRITON JAMES WINslow sped to victory in Round 8 of the Asian Formula Three Series here Sunday even as Irishman Ali Jackson triggered a major overhaul in the standings that left the Philippines' erstwhile leader Tyson Sy slipping to third overall and with a lot of catching up to do.

Sy, coming off a fifth place finish in Round 7 on Saturday, lost control trying to overtake Indonesian Moreno Soeprapto on a tight corner in the 9th lap. Both failed to pick up precious points going into Round 9 later Sunday.

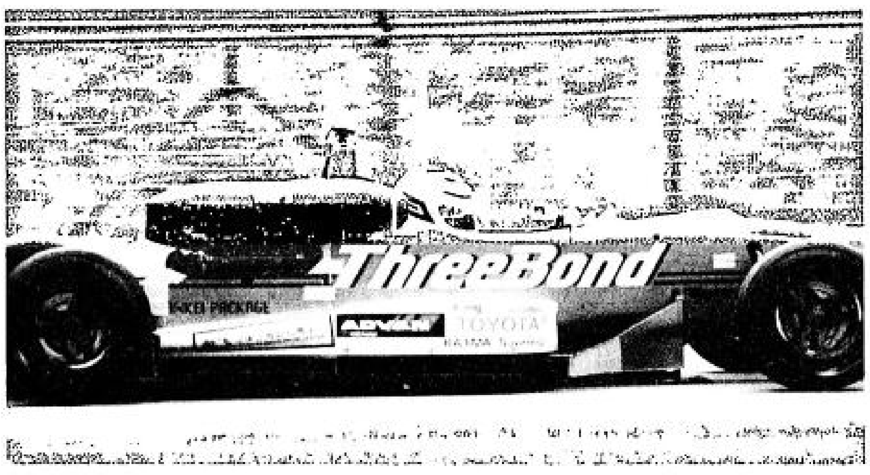
For the second straight day, Dado Peña of Team Goddard failed to finish after touching cars with fellow Filipino Pepon Marave in the second of the 12-lap race.

Jackson's bid for a third straight win was thwarted by Winslow who seized in the second lap. But the 17-year-old Jackson of Aran Racing took runner-up honors worth 15 points and moved ahead in the drivers' championship with 107.

Dillion Batistini, Winslow's Fujitsu Racing with Threebond JA Motorsport teammate, finished fourth behind Soeprapto of Aran Racing and picked up 10 points, good enough to propel him to second overall from third at 98, three points ahead of Sy.

With his first win of the season, Winslow, driving a car with a new chassis, earned 20 points and improved to 92, still in fourth but on target to overtake Sy and Battistini. Winslow will start on the front grid in Round 9.

Moreno earned 12 points for his third place finish and improved to 52, in a tie for fifth place with Peña, who will start the next race at the back of the grid.



BRITAIN'S James Winslow speeds to a handsome victory in Round 8.

ASIAN F3 SERIES
Round 8

1. J. Winslow	England	19:35.912
2. A. Jackson	Ireland	19:43.618
3. M. Soeprapto	Indonesia	19:48.316
4. D. Battistini	England	19:48.866
5. B. Hermanto	Indonesia	20:01.093

"I started from second on the grid but I really made a good start, got past Ali and just kept my position," said Winslow.

"I'll try to win as many races as I could and just earn my points."

After losing the lead to Winslow, Jackson opted to stay back and keep Moreno in check the rest of the way, aware that a second place finish would be enough to catapult him to the overall lead.

Jackson already has three wins so far this year, counting his breakthrough victory in Round 5 here last month.

Sy, of Speedtech Asia, lost the overall lead but not his enthusiasm despite continuing problems with his Dallara 304, rebuilt after a crash with teammate Gaby dela Merced in Round 5.

"There are still some problems with the car, especially in handling," he said. "I'm down by 12 points but I'll be back this afternoon."

Peña kept himself scarce after his latest misadventure but Marave, the overall champion in 2003 driving for Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO, explained the incident that both took them out.

"Dado hit me on the side and I spun, hitting him as a result," Marave said. "There was an argument as we got out of our cars but it's normal. The bad thing is we were both out of the race."

Indon Satrio Hermanto of R&W Team Indonesia Joson F3 topped the Promotions class for cars with chassis built in 2000 and older while Dela Merced came in second.

Redemption for Buenavista

Tolentino unchallenged in Milo MM distaff race

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHEN EDUARDO "VERTEK" BUENAVISTA ruled the Metro Manila leg of the 30th National Milo Marathon yesterday, he didn't just leave behind a pack of a thousand or so runners.

The diminutive marvel had also put behind him the most painful episode of his running career.

"I'm continuing with my plan to shift to marathon," Buenavista said in Filipino, minutes after topping the 42K race in two hours, 33 minutes and 10 seconds.

Buenavista, who boasts several national records in oval races, has just opened a new chapter in his career after his infamous disqualification during the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

The 27-year-old was stripped of the gold after judges ruled he obstructed Thai runner Boonthung Srisung in the final dash to the finish of the 5,000-meter race last December in Manila.

"*Medyo masakit pa rin* (It still hurts a bit)," said Buenavista. "But I have been preparing for the marathon, just in case I qualify in the Asian Games."

Although he already bagged the grand final and set the course record 2:22:21 in the 2002 Milo Marathon, Buenavista has earned more raves in the 10,000 and 5,000 events.

But yesterday, he displayed improved stamina as he crossed the finish line at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila almost a full minute ahead of runnerup Mamerto Corpuz (2:34:08).

"Corpuz set a fast pace," said Buenavista, who stands barely five feet. "I was only jogging at the start."

But running his own race turned out to be a good decision for Buenavista: "I was lagging behind by five minutes. I was running eighth in the last 15 kilometers, then I started catching up."

BUENAVISTA: New focus RYAN LIM

TOLENTINO: Easy does it. RYAN LIM

By the time the leaders reached Buendia, Makati City, Buenavista overtook Corpuz and third runner-up Reynaldo delos Reyes (2:45:19).

In the women's division, 19-year-old Ailyn Tolentino easily captured the crown with a time of 3:12:26.

Tolentino, a Criminology student at La Salle-Dasmariñas, finished exactly 40 minutes ahead of runner-up Geraldine Sealza (3:52:26). Daisy Castillon, 41, finished third in 3:52:41.

The winners earned slots in the grand final of the nationwide series on Dec. 10. All male participants who logged in less than four hours and female runners who finished within four and a half hours also qualified.

Buenavista, whose record here was broken by Cresenciano Sabal (2:21:33) last year, pocketed P30,000 while Corpus and Delos Reyes won P20,000 and P10,000 respectively.

The country's undisputed 10K queen Mercedita Manipol retained her crown with a time of 35:39. Roman Salbino ruled the men's race in 33:47.

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SPORTS

Sweet repeat

Sugar Shane wins rematch vs Vargas

SHANE Mosley makes his victory more convincing this time, sending Fernando Vargas on his back in the sixth round. AP

LAS VEGAS—EVEN WITH two good eyes, Fernando Vargas never saw Sugar Shane Mosley's perfect left hook.

Mosley stopped Vargas in the sixth round of their 154-pound rematch Saturday night, flattening Vargas with a walloping left hand for his second victory in the rivalry in five months.

A grotesque swelling that closed Vargas' left eye caused the fighters' first match to be stopped in the 10th round in February. But Sugar Shane had a plan that Vargas simply couldn't see in the rematch—and it ended with a punch that caught Vargas completely by surprise.

"When I was in the ring, I remembered watching Oscar (De La Hoya) fight Vargas, and he threw that perfect left hook," Mosley said, referring to the Golden Boy's 11th-round TKO of Vargas four years ago. "I was bouncing around, and I saw the opportunity, and I threw the perfect left hook again."

The charismatic four-time world champion is back on form after four losses from 2002-04, and he might get a matchup with Floyd Mayweather Jr. or Antonio Margarito next year if Mosley drops to 147 pounds.

Mosley was more aggressive and sharp from the opening bell, patiently landing the right hand that hurt Vargas repeatedly in their first fight. Vargas seemed frustrated and disorganized, never winning a clear-cut round.

Mosley opened a cut above Vargas' right eye in the fifth round, but neither fighter had done much in the sixth until Vargas failed to block that crushing left hand from Mosley, buckling Vargas' knees and sending him to the canvas.

"I thought I was doing well up until the left hook," said Vargas, who never even saw the punch until he watched the replay. "I thought it was slowly going my way."

Mosley climbed the ropes while Vargas twice struggled to get up. The fight resumed for 10 seconds, but Vargas couldn't defend himself from Mosley's final blows before referee Kenny Bayless stopped the fight with 22 seconds left in the round.

Vargas seemed weak at the start, perhaps suffering from his weight fluctuations before the fight. He made weight on Friday, then apparently gained close to 14 pounds of hydration before the fight—which might have slowed him down. *AP*

HOW MANY WAYS DOES A BALD MAN SUFFER?
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- *Spend time looking in the mirror at hairlhead*
- *Feel self-conscious*
- *Look older than actual age*
- *Feel less attractive*
- *Envy good-looking men*
- *Try to improve hairstyle*
- *Wear hats or caps*

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Landis braces for crucial stages

MONTELIMAR, FRANCE—FLOYD Landis is willing to gamble that his best days at the Tour de France are ahead of him.

The American gave up the race's overall lead on Saturday, deciding to save his energy for next week's vital stages before the Tour reaches its finish in Paris next Sunday.

Spain's Oscar Pereiro, of Illes Balears, claimed the jersey by finishing 29 minutes, 57 seconds ahead of Landis and the main pack of riders in Saturday's 13th stage. Jens Voigt of Germany won the stage, finishing in the same time as Pereiro.

"I don't think we need to keep the jersey every day, and I'm happy to see Pereiro get the jersey," said Landis, a teammate of Pereiro's on Phonak. "He's an ex-teammate of mine, and he looked happy."

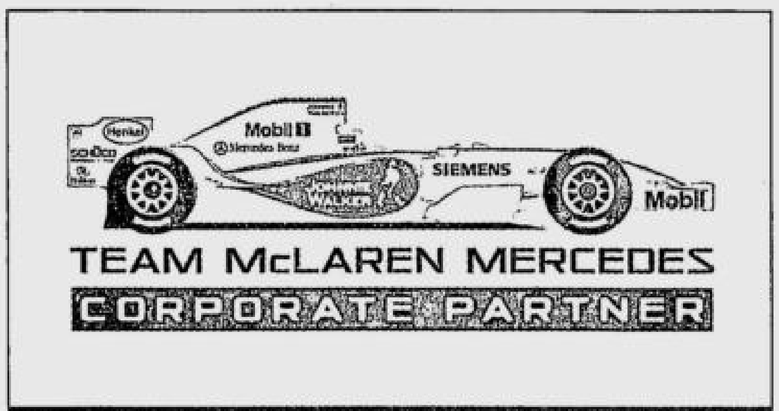
Landis slipped to second overall, 1:29 behind the Spaniard. Pereiro understood the logic of his former teammate's strategy.

"I don't consider it a gift, but for them it's an advantage now to see someone else have to work to control the race," Pereiro said.

For years, the strategy of many Tour favorites has been to allow other riders to take the jersey, then recapture it in the time trials and grueling mountain stages. The tactic lessens the pressure on teams to protect their leader and ride hard at the front. It was often a rule of thumb for Lance Armstrong en route to his seven Tour victories. *AP*

Sportshouse badminton unwraps today

ANOTHER MUCH-AWAITED BADMINTON TOURNAMENT WILL BE HELD starting today with the staging of the Sportshouse Dunlop Corporate and Celebrity Cup at the Club 650 Libis and SM Megamall. Fifteen teams, led by the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Philippine Star, will see action in the Corporate Classic, one of the two divisions to be disputed in the week-long tournament organized by former Olympian Weena Lim and sponsored by Sportshouse for the fourth straight year. The other division is the Corporate Masters, which drew the participation of four teams, namely, Star, Dunlop, Meralco and Inktelligence. The other teams vying in the Corporate Classic are Dunlop, Ratsky, SM Supermalls, Pagcor, Purefoods, Slazenger, Chevron, Meralco, Manila Bulletin, NBI, SMC, ABS-CBN and Celestron.



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KEEP WALKING.
JOHNNIE WALKER.

'Salpukan' Round 4 today

SIXTY FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN ROUND FOUR OF the "Salpukan Sa Taglugon" 5-cock derby which blasts off at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum. The six-day (July 10, 12, 15, 17, 19 and 22) event sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace is hosted by WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. headed by promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. A total of 264 participants have signed for this event which offers a a prize pot of P3 million. Entries will still be accepted on Tuesday. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

San Juan derby under way

SAN JUAN COLISEUM'S "RAMBULAN SA SAN Juan" 5-cock derby starts today with 82 encounters lined up and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Promoter Ronnie Lacsina of UBBA Sports said the elimination rounds will be held today and on Wednesday, Friday and Monday. Those with two points will compete on July 29. The SJC management has guaranteed the total cash prize of P3.5 million. For inquiries, call 725-6563, 725-5369 or 0917-8041691.

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TRIPLE CROWN

Mr. Victory lives up to his name

By Musong R. Castillo

A HARD-FINISHING STAYER WON THE third leg of the 2006 Triple Crown series.

But it was not overwhelming first choice Special Edition.

Longest shot Mr. Victory came charging from the tail end of the pack yesterday and nipped Don Exequiel at the wire to rule the Horseman's Cup, the final installment of this year's series which produced surprise winners each time.

The three-year-old chestnut owned by Jake Maderazo benefited from an error made by Don Exequiel rider Antonio Alcasid and Fernando Raquel made the most out of the opening he saw for the colt's biggest career win.

Mr. Victory, whose original series rider, Jeffrey Zarate, fell at the jump of the first leg won by Don Exequiel, clocked 2:11.4 (27', 23', 25', 25', 29) over a hard track at the Santa Ana Park in Makati.

It was worth a cool P1.2 million for his handlers.

Million Dollar, under Jonathan B. Hernandez, again set the pace with Don Exequiel hot on his heels until the field reached the backstretch.

Alcasid then wheeled Don Exequiel out front with more than 800 meters to go and looked ready to book a second leg win, still leading by a clear four lengths when the field rounded for home.

Sorry setback

But it looked like Alcasid, a veteran of many big races, stopped coaxing Don Exequiel nearing the wire.

It was a sorry setback for the Hermie Esguerra-owned Don Exequiel, the fourth finisher in the second leg won by Special Edition.

He settled for the P450,000 runner-up's prize.

Million Dollar finished third worth P250,000, the first time in the series that the speedball landed in the money.

Special Edition, who cornered a huge chunk of the bettings with the distance suiting her come-from-behind style well, checked in a badly-beaten fourth worth P100,000.

Jet Sutter, Dixie The Younger and Batong Silyar wound up the finishing order.

The Mr. Victory win assured that no entry repeated in winning this year, proof of how wide open this series went.

Due to space constraints, CLEAN LIVING will come out tomorrow

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Puruntong family reunion

FOR MARICEL SORIANO (SHIRLEY), THE first taping day of the ABS-CBN sitcom "John En Shirley" felt like a "family reunion."

"It had been a long time since we last worked together. It was exciting," Maricel said of acting again with her *Tatay* Dolphy (as dad John Puruntong) and Susan Roces (as Encarnacion or En, Shirley's mother-in-law).

Dolphy and Susan starred in "Boksingera Daw" in 1956. Susan and Maricel topbilled "Super Inday" movies for Regal in the 1980s. Completing the "clan" are producer Kitchie Benedicto, Dolphy's real-life son Vandolph and director Bert de Leon—who composed the theme of the old kiddie show "Kaluskos Musmos," which starred a pre-teen Maricel in the 1970s. Story and more pictures in Stars Living on Friday. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

A FAMILY AFFAIR: Dad Dolphy fiddles with the shirt of real-life son Vandolph, who plays Atong Puruntong (above, left). Director Bert de Leon (standing, above, right) gives last-minute instructions to the entire cast on the first taping day of "John En Shirley."

PHOTOS BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

THE LAST time Maricel and Susan acted together was in Regal Films' "Super Inday."

How producers can apply for Film Fund subsidy

By Marinel R. Cruz

AN EIGHT-POINT guideline on how film producers can avail of a portion of the P25-million Film Fund was released last week by the Film Development Council of the Philippines, according to FDCP vice chair Christine Dayrit.

The new set of rules and regulations was drawn up by FDCP chair Rolando "Jacky" Atienza, National Artist for Film Eddie Romero, film producer Digna Santiago, and Dayrit.

Romero heads the Film Fund's selection committee and Santiago is chair of the monitoring committee. Dayrit is also chief of the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Gov't subsidy

The Film Fund is a government subsidy for local producers. According to Atienza, it is intended to "stimulate economic activity in the industry and encourage production of quality Filipino films."

Dayrit said the new rules and regulations are meant to answer questions about producers' eligibility for subsidy; criteria for film projects; the application process and selection process; fund disbursement procedures; and film monitoring.

First three

The essential features of said joint ventures between FDCP and the film producers are included in the draft.

Dayrit said the council would announce the first three subsidy recipients by end of September.

The draft likewise discusses the FDCP's claim on a film, in

HOW/ A2-2

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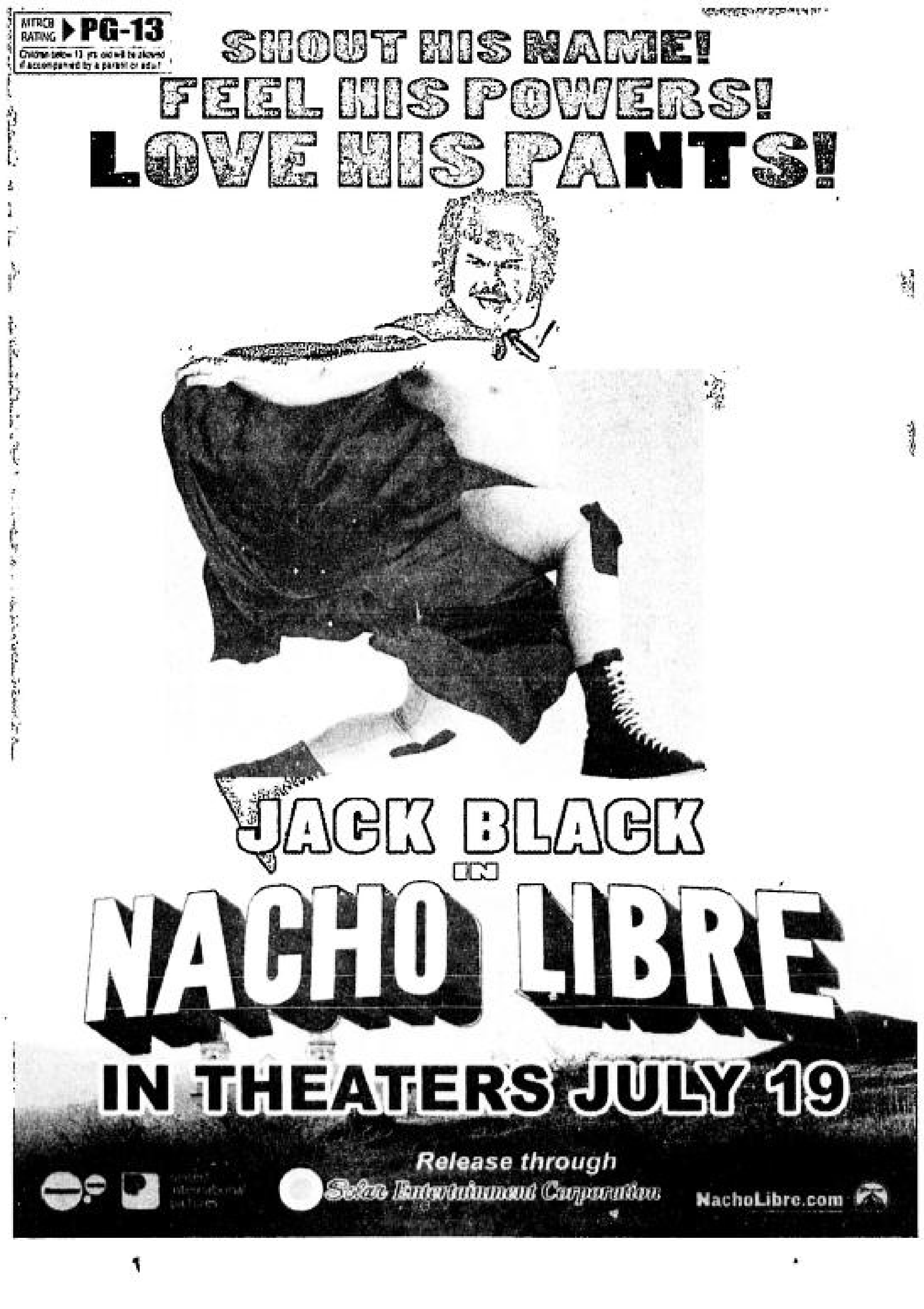
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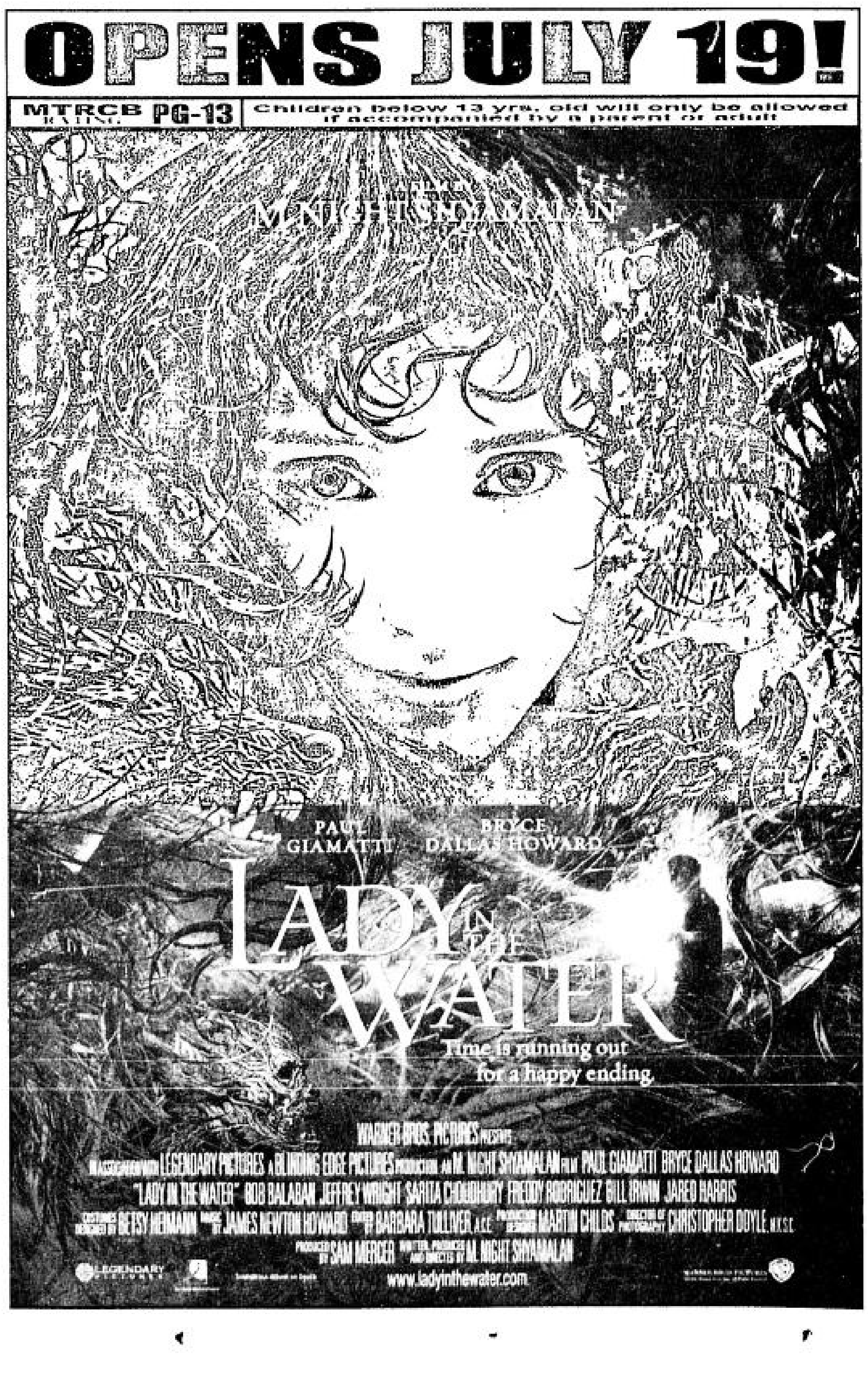
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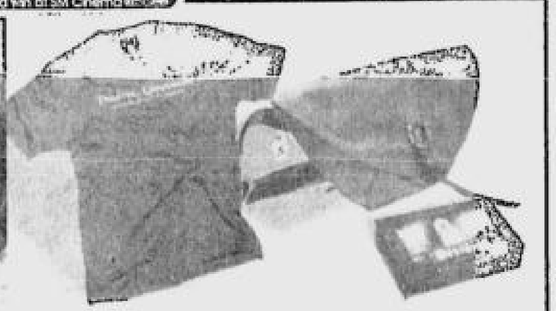


WIN! Pirates of the Carribean: Dead Man's Chest playing card: shirts and bags from Buena Vista International by simply answering this question, from the movie:

What is the name of Will Turner's father?

Send in your answers together with your particulars at movieaddicts_smcinema@yahoo.com or at your nearest SM Cinema branch. Answer must be correct in order to qualify. Multiple entries received will only be counted as a single entry. Ten (10) lucky winners will be drawn from all the correct received. Deadline for submission of entries is on July 25, 2006.

NOW SHOWING

Distributed by BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL
ALL AGES ADMITTED

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
SUPERMAN RETURNS
9:00 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 12:00MN
PREMIERE CINEMA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
LOVEWRECKED
SCARY MOVIE 4
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
I WANNA BE HAPPY

PODIUM
CINEMA 1
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
CINEMA 2
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM NORTH EDSA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
LOVEWRECKED
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
INITIAL D
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY BICUTAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM MEGACINEMA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
LAKE HOUSE
THE NUN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
LOVEWRECKED
BATAS MILITAR

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LOVEWRECKED
INITIAL D
BATAS MILITAR
I WANNA BE HAPPY
THE NUN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
INITIAL D
SCARY MOVIE 4
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
LOVEWRECKED
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
THE NUN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
BATAS MILITAR

SM CITY DASMARINAS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
BATAS MILITAR
I WANNA BE HAPPY
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY STA. MESA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
I WANNA BE HAPPY
THE NUN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
LOVEWRECKED
SCARY MOVIE 4
BATAS MILITAR

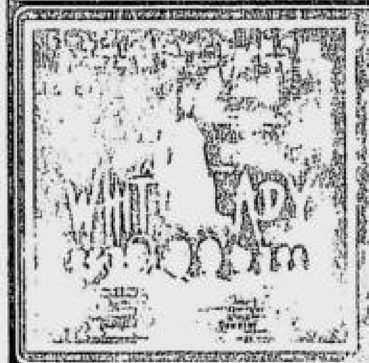
SM CITY MANILA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
THE NUN.
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LOVEWRECKED
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
BATAS MILITAR
LAKE HOUSE
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SCARY MOVIE 4
INITIAL D
I WANNA BE HAPPY

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LOVEWRECKED
I WANNA BE HAPPY

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY SUCAT
I WANNA BE HAPPY
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY

Red Carpet
movietime



REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC. SM CINEMA iFM 93.9
cordially invite you to the
Red Carpet Premiere of
WHITE LADY
July 18, 2006
SM Megamall Cinema 10
Starring
Panganiban, Pauleen Luna, Jason Abalos, JC De Vera, Iwa Moto
Carlo, Glaiza De Castro, Ketchup Eusebio, Franzen Fajardo

SM CITY BAGUIO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
I WANNA BE HAPPY
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY MARILAO
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY BACOOR
BATAS MILITAR
THE NUN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
I WANNA BE HAPPY
LOVEWRECKED
INITIAL D

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LAKE HOUSE

SM CITY LUCENA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
AQUAMARINE
FAST AND FURIOUS 3

SM CITY CLARK
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
BATAS MILITAR
SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
BATAS MILITAR
SUPERMAN RETURNS
I WANNA BE HAPPY

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
BATAS MILITAR
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY STA. ROSA
BATAS MILITAR
I WANNA BE HAPPY
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY CEBU
CHAOS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
TAKE THE LEAD
I WANNA BE HAPPY
THE NUN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

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SM CITY ILOILO
LAKE HOUSE
RESERVED
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
RESERVED
THE NUN

SM CITY DAVAO
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
THE NUN
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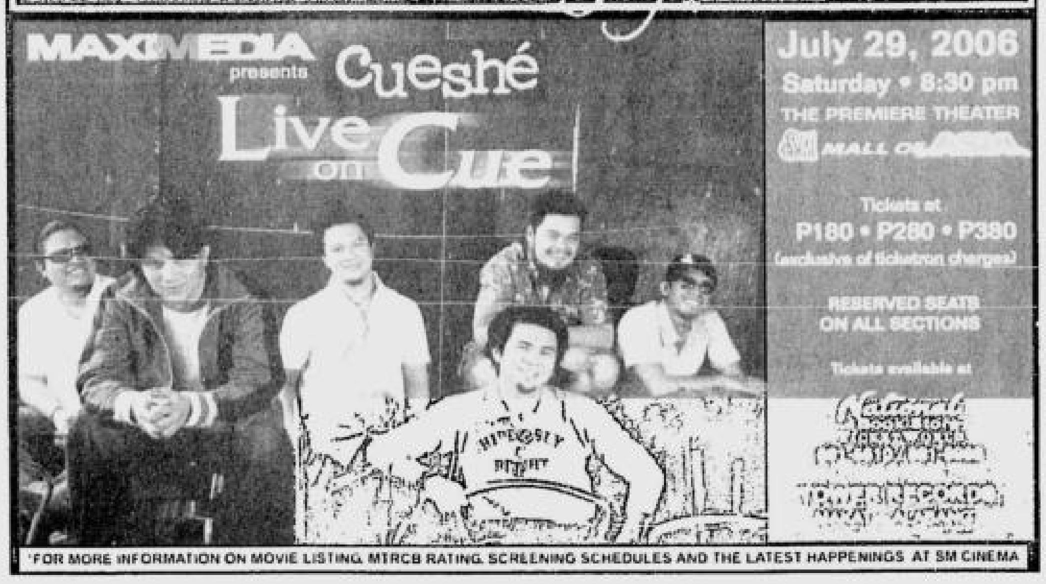
FAST AND FURIOUS
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN3
SUPERMAN RETURN

SM CITY CAGAYAN
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

EVENT CALENDAR SM CENTERstage EVENT CALENDAR



MAXIMEDIA presents Cueshé Live on Cue
July 29, 2006
Saturday • 8:30 pm
THE PREMIERE THEATER
SM MALL OF ASIA
Tickets at
P180 • P280 • P380
(exclusive of ticketron charges)
RESERVED SEATS ON ALL SECTIONS
Tickets available at

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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GALLERIA 632-8116

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 • THX
12.00 3.10 6.20 9:30

2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
12:30 3:40 6.50 10.00

3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 10 5:20 8 30

4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
11:30 2:40 5:50 9.00

5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
12.30 3:40 6.50 10:00

6 LAKE HOUSE
12.00 2:10 4.20

7 PIRATE SOF THE CARRIBEAN 2
1:40 4:50 8:00

8 I WANNA BE HAPPY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

9 LOVE WRECKED
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

10 SEE NO EVIL
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

ERMITA 536-7800 to 12

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 10:20 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

2 BATAS MILITAR 12:30 2:50
SEE NO EVIL 6:00 7:55 9:50

3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
12:20 3:15 6:10 9:05

5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
10.30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9.50

6 LOVE WRECKED
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

7 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
11:20 2:15 5:10 8:05

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 LOVE WRECKED
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3:00 6:00 9:00

4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:20 3:20 6:20 9:15

5 SEE NO EVIL
1.00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

6 BATAS MILITAR 1:00 3:00
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 2:00 5:00

7 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00

8 I WANNA BE HAPPY
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00

NOVALICHES 936-3234 • 936-3229-30

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 INITIAL D

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5379

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 LOVE WRECKED

LET'S GET READY TO SCREEEAM!

WWE Superstar KANE is the new name in TERROR "SEE NO EVIL"

Kane plays the Henchman from Hell Jacob Goodnight. With a rusty steel plate screwed into his skull and razor-sharp fingernails that pluck out his victim's eyes, Jacob is a reclusive psychopath holed up in the long-abandoned and rotting Blackwell Hotel. Eight juvenile delinquents then show up at the run-down hotel for community service duty along with the cop who put a bullet in Jacob's head for four years ago. Jacob hunts them down using a meat hook and chain through a maze of broken-down hallways and rooms. When one of their own is kidnapped by Jacob and her fate uncertain, the remaining delinquents must fight this indestructible force of nature with a violent score to settle.

NOW SHOWING
at Robinsons Movieworld
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sta. rosa • bacolod

MTRCB Rating: R-18

STA ROSA (049) 837-0807

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SEE NO EVIL
4 I WANNA BE HAPPY

LIPA (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 I WANNA BE HAPPY
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-132

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 BATAS MILITAR
4 I WANNA BE HAPPY

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 I WANNA BE HAPPY
3 BATAS MILITAR
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 BATAS MILITAR
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2

STARMILLS (045) 875-1827 (045) 961-6270

1 TAKE THE LEAD
2 BATAS MILITAR
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
6 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2

BACOLOD (034) 441-0455 (034) 441-0458

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
4 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
5 LAKE HOUSE
6 SEE NO EVIL

ILOILO (033) 338-8070

1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 THE NUN
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 LAKE HOUSE

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Get Special discounts for volume purchases!

For marketing and events/reservations please call Marketing Services Department at 687-7945 to 47 locals 14 and 15

A2-2

PAROKYA ni Edgar

Why C
specia

WHILE SHOPPING IN A PO
ment store in Bangkok earl
Megastar Sharon Cuneta sa
that made her "feel very p
the CD of Filipino sing
Bautista, proudly displayed
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"I'm really happy about h
reer has taken him, how he
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and all our other Asian ne
his music. He deserves it.
pang bata kaya ko laging m
guest [in my shows]," says
of Christian.

The two first sang togeth
Guam concert late last yea
Josh Groban's "The Pray
Raised Me Up." Sharon inv
again to be a special gues
Mega Valentine" concert a
Coliseum this year—and th
the repeat, and for the fi
provincial tour, in Lucena
29, will entertain Pampange
po Filipino in Clark Field.

Call 911-5555 or 926-055

SPONGE COLA

SPONGECOLA

Levi's free conce

Levi's marks the openin
store in SM Mall of Asia (
rink), with a free rock con
Music Hall on July 29, from

To be featured in the co
rock bands Hale, Imago, Sp
Urbandub.

Booze Night con

The Filipino blues commu
the web-based pinoyblues
Night: A Benefit Concert fo

How pr

From page A2-1

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In addition, the guidel
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and monitoring committe
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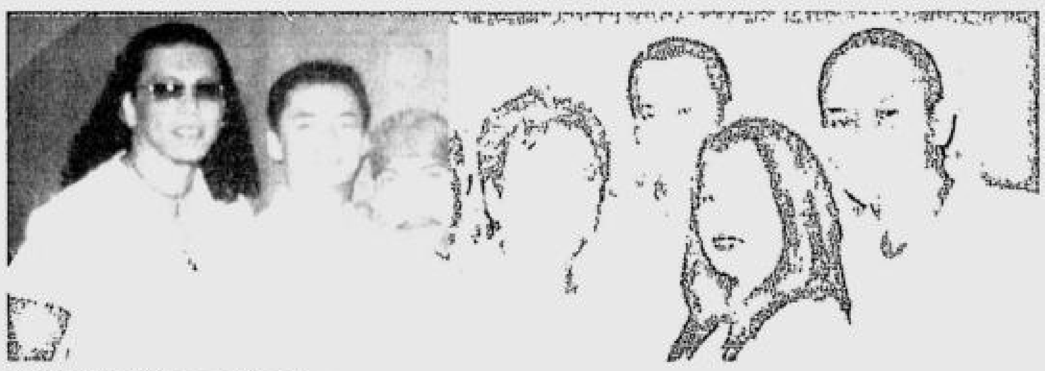
Only Filipinos

According to the draft,
available only to Filipin
The films should be shot
Philippines and at least 9
the cast and staff members
should be Filipinos.

To apply for the subsid
must submit, among oth
script, the proposed cast
budget for the project—as
request for financial assist

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TITO NIEVES



FLINTSTONES and The Gang

hristian is Sharon's l guest—again

SHOW TIME

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SHARON Cuneta and Christian Bautista

rio," concludes on July 29 at Gweilo's Eastwood. This third leg in a series that kicked off on July 6 at the Conspiracy Bar on Visayas Ave, Quezon City, features the bands Firebottle, Snakecharmer, Huka, the Blue Rats and Soulbenders.

Egay, one of the best harmonica players in the country, was a member of the famed '70s band, Labuyo, which popularized such songs as "Tuloy Pa Rin" and "Batugan."

Last year, he was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism with heart complications. He has been out of work since. Proceeds of the concert series have been earmarked for Egay's mounting medical costs and other personal needs.

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Egay Impe-

Tito Nieves concert

The "Tito Nieves ... Live in Manila" concert has been moved to Aug. 19, at Harbor Tent, Hotel Philippine Plaza, CCP Complex.

The Puerto Rican salsa great is flying in with his 16-piece band from Orlando Florida.

Proceeds of the concert will go to the Vides Foundation for street children.

Tonight

Listen to the soothing repertoire of acoustic trio **Silk & Steel** on July 17, 24 and 31 at **Merk's Bar Bistro**, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City. For inquiries, call 757-4720 or 757-4721.

Tomorrow

On July 18 and 21, **National Nutrition Council's Search for Little Ms Nutrition** and **Jingle singing contest** will be hosted at **Riverbanks Mall.** Call 948-0006 to 10 local 109 for information.

Retro band **Aretha & Souled Out Band** will perform on July 18 and 25 at **Merk's Bar Bistro.** For inquiries, call 757-4720 or 757-4721

July 20

Stella Ruiz, together with **The H20 Band**, will have a show titled "Strong Enough" at **Merk's Bar Bistro** on July 20 and 27. For inquiries, call Merk's at 757-4720 or 757-4721.

July 21

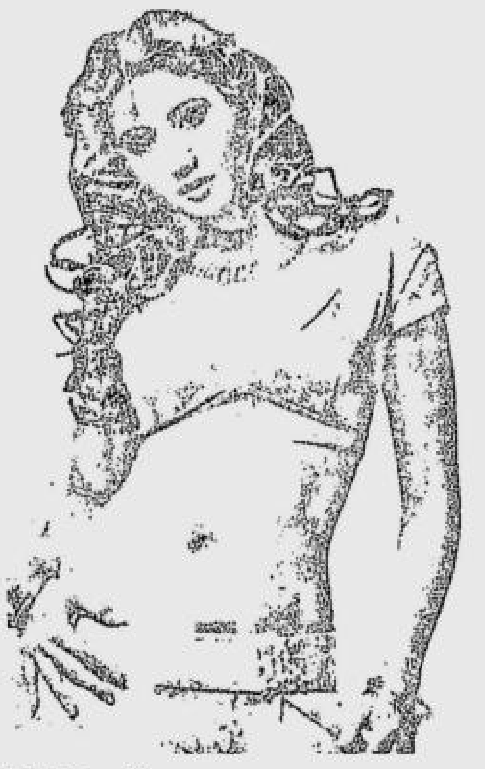
Parokya Ni Edgar will have a comeback concert at the **Pagcor Grand Theater, Airport Casino Filipino,** at 9 p.m. For ticket inquiries please call Live Artists Production Inc. 920-2643 and 926-0556, All SM Ticketnet Outlets 911-5555, Ticketworld 891-9999 and Airport Casino Filipino 852-7754.

Flintstones and the Gang will perform on July 21, 22 and 28 at **Merk's Bar Bistro.** For inquiries, call 757-4720 or 757-4721.

July 22

Rica Peralejo will be having her "Bollywood Fever" album mall tour at **Ever Gotesco-Ortigas.** The exciting **Go Girls** will be with the singer/actress during her tour.

Brightgold Production will showcase their talents in a mall show dubbed "Happy Healthy Me" at 5 p.m. at **Riverbanks Foodcourt Entertainment Venue.**



RICA Peralejo

STELLA Ruiz

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profile of the producer/director.

There will be a 60-day period during which all applications will be evaluated by the selection committee.

The producers should start shooting within six weeks, at the latest, upon approval of the funding and should have secured a play date, which is within three months after the completion of post-production.

The monitoring committee has the option to visit the work in progress, according to the draft.

Release sked

Forty percent of the subsidy will be turned over to the producer when 67 percent of the film's principal photography has been completed and the edited rushes have been approved by the monitoring committee.

Another 40 percent will be released when the producer submits the final copy; and the remaining 20 percent upon the delivery and viewing of the first print.

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 MTRCB GP 1 40, 4 50, 8 00
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 MTRCB GP 2 40, 5 50, 9 00
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS MTRCB GP 12 30, 3.35, 6.40, 9 50
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 MTRCB GP 12 40, 3 50, 10 10
PREMIERE THEATRE PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12 00, 3 10, 6 20, 9 30 MTRCB GP
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
Come to SHANG'S SEASON-ENDER SALE from JULY 14-31! Enjoy up to 75% OFF on selected items! Get a chance to win exciting prizes in the "SHOP, PICK AND WIN" promo during the sale period.
For inquiries, please call 633-7851 to 70
See posters and flyers for details. Per DTI NCR Permit No. A3 0536 series of 2006
Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 633-2227 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12:15, 3:10, 6:05 9:00 GP
CINEMA 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:10, 3:20, 6:30 9:40 GP
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinotertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:00, 2:10, 5:20 8:30 GP
CINEMA 4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 11:10, 2:05, 5:00 7:55, 10:50 GP
CINEMA 5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 10:30, 1:25, 4:20 7:15, 10:10 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.
MUSIC MUSEUM
JULY 22, 2006 RAZORBACK BAND 9:00PM
JULY 29, 2006 PILITA C. & ELIZABETH R 8:30PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS
EVERY MONDAY DANCE NIGHT 7:00PM
EVERY WEDNESDAY CERRUDO ... CLASSICO 8:00PM
JULY 21, 2006 JUICE 9:00PM
FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC 116
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

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Thoroughly Enjoyable! Laugh Until You Cry.
ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR!
HIGHLY ENTERTAINING, DELIGHTFUL & HEARTHWARWING!
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MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
EDDIE GARCIA GLORIA ROMERO
CHERRY PIE PICACHE DIANA ZUBIRI
CHRISTIAN VAZQUEZ ALFRED VARGAS
KEANNA REEVES as Cristy and JOEY MARQUEZ
in alphabetical order
JASON ABALOS
TERENCE BAYLON
DION IGNACIO
MICHELLE MADRIGAL
& ALWIN UYTINGCO
I Wanna Be Happy
You can choose your friends but not your relatives
90.7 LOVE RADIO
written and directed by JOSE JAVIER REYES
a SEIKO Films Presentation

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

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6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 633.7851 loc. 171
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
PREMIERE
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 I WANNA BE HAPPY

metropolis star cinema
www.clicktheuty.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 BATAS MILITAR
2 I WANNA BE HAPPY
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

THEATRES
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 I WANNA BE HAPPY
3 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS -3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
6 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
7 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
8 I WANNA BE HAPPY
9 INITIAL - D
10 BATAS MILITAR

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
4 (DOLBY) INITIAL - D

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
5 BATAS MILITAR

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SEE NO EVIL
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 I WANNA BE HAPPY
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 I WANNA BE HAPPY
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 BATAS MILITAR

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 GARFIELD - 2

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millennium

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(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 I WANNA BE HAPPY
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 I WANNA BE HAPPY
2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SEE NO EVIL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 LAKE HOUSE
3 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS -3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 AMERICAN HAUNTING
2 TAKE THE LEAD
3 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS -3
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795 3320
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN - 2
2 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS -3
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS -3

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 SEE NO EVIL
2 LAKE HOUSE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2
2 HIRAM NA KATAWAN
3 BALAT SIBUYAS
4 SEE NO EVIL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SEE NO EVIL
2 MOLATA
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 I WANNA BE HAPPY
5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LAKE HOUSE
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 I WANNA BE HAPPY
4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN-2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SCARY MOVIE - 4
2 MASARAP NA PUGAD

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RUSHES

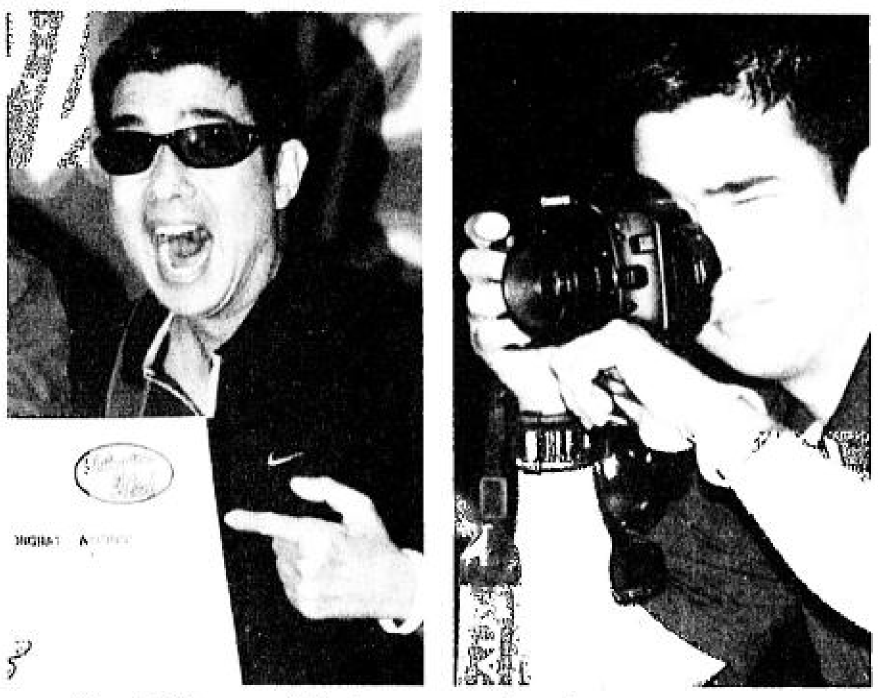
Goofy moments at 'Idol' auditions

ALTHOUGH HE SOMETIMES SENDS contestants out of the audition room fuming—or sobbing—"Philippine Idol" judge Francis Magalona has goofy moments, too.

During breaks, the singer-TV host walks and kids around, poses for pictures with fans and chats with the ABC 5 crew. Kiko also takes snapshots of the scenes around him—colorful characters, hyperactive contestants, intense interactions—that he later uploads on his website, francismagalona.multiply.com

Kiko's fellow judges Pilita Corrales and Ryan Cayabyab kill time some other way. Refer to photos here.

DEFINE 'BREAK TIME.' Pilita touches up, Mr. C gets in touch ... RUDY ESPERAS



... and FrancisM tunes out of judge persona altogether. RUDY ESPERAS

KATRINA Halili, this year's "sexiest."

Victory party

This is one victory bash where the spectators were the biggest winners.

FHM Philippines threw the party for its 100 Sexiest Women in the World 2006 at the World Trade Center.

Guests were treated to sizzling hot performances of the mag's cover girls, plus live music by Kamikaze. Actress Katrina Halili was named sexiest of them all.

ROCK star Gene Simmons of the band Kiss, left, and partner of 23 years, former Playboy Playmate Shannon Tweed—stars of the new A&E network reality series "Gene Simmons Family Jewels"—speak before a panel discussion at the Cable Television Critics Association press tour in Pasadena, California. REUTERS

Fil-Ams like her

Fil-Am singer Amber recently released her album, "Feel Good Music." Amber says the carrier single, "Manila," was inspired by her recent homecoming. "It is meant to inspire Filipinos everywhere, of every class, to embrace their culture and be proud ot it."

AMBER

Tina Paner's sister

Danita Paner is the younger of two daughters of Daisy Romualdez and Manny Paner. Which makes her the sister of Tina Paner—remember her?—who's now based in Barcelona, Spain. Danita is working on an album for Viva Records and a debut concert in September. Her guests (she's starting on the right foot): Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby.

DANITA PANER

Message of hope

LONDON—Australian pop singer Kylie Minogue gave a message of hope for cancer sufferers when she talked for the first time publicly about her ordeal with the disease in a television interview.

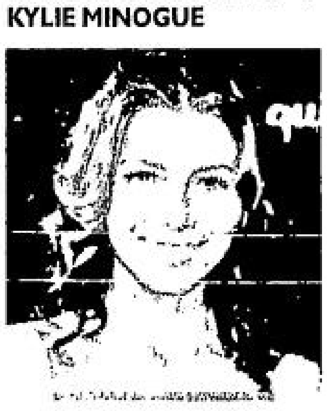
"It's like a bomb has dropped," the 38-year-old singer said of the experience, in an interview on Britain's Sky One channel. "I was just completely thrown into another world." Minogue—Australia's biggest pop star, having sold an estimated 40 million records worldwide—said she was far from fully recovered from breast cancer. *AFP*

KYLIE MINOGUE

Heavenly date

DENVER — A date with TV actress Jessica Biel will be up for bid next week to help raise money for a teenager who lost her leg in a limousine accident on the night of a school dance, Denver newspapers reported this week.

The event dubbed "Mollypalooza" to help Molly Bloom's family with medical expenses is scheduled for Tuesday at the Rock Island Club, organizers told The Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News. The News described the date as a lunch date. In an audio message posted on the Internet, Esquire's "Sexiest Woman Alive" urges listeners to support the event and says: "I intend to submit a very special auction item as my contribution to the evening." *AP*



JESSICA BIEL

EXCLUSIVE SCREENING
Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA and ERMITA
Showing on JULY 19

The latest film maker Zalman King, "Wild Orchid 2" is as erotic as it gets, apart from which, it is truly a satisfactory "couples erotica."

It has a sentimental storyline about a young girl named Blue (Nina Siemaszko) who is forced into prostitution by economic circumstances. She tries to live a double life in and out of the brothel and, in a vaguely Elizabethan twist, ends up providing paid pleasure to her dream man while she is in disguise.

The knowledge Blue gains while in dusguise allows her to evaluate her lover's sincerity later on. With the aid of a sympathetic brothel bodyguard Sully, Blue escapes the hold everted on her by the madam, leaves town, and tries to establish herself as a high school student - in the same high school where her dream boy is the school quarterback! They end up courting one another chastely, although he remains unaware that he has already had sex with her. Meanwhile, the jilted madam wants Blue back, and will stop at nothing to get her.

MTRCB Rating: R-18

For SCREENING SCHEDULE, pls. call our CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

Nina Siemaszko
Wild Orchid 2

WRESTLING SUPERSTAR
SEE NO EVIL

WWE Superstar KANE is the new name in TERROR "SEE NO EVIL"

Kane plays the Henchman from Hell Jacob Goodnight. With a rusty steel plate screwed into his skull and razor-sharp fingernails that pluck out his victim's eyes, Jacob is a reclusive psychopath holed up in the long-abandoned and rotting Blackwell Hotel. Eight juvenile delinquents then show up at the run-down hotel for community service duty along with the cop who put a bullet in Jacob's head for four years ago. Jacob hunts them down using a meat hook and chain through a maze of broken-down hallways and rooms. When one of their own is kidnapped by Jacob and her fate uncertain, the remaining delinquents must fight this indestructible force of nature with a violent score to settle.

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MTRCB Rating: R-18

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1	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN	12:50, 4:10, 7:30, 11:00	G
2	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN	1:40, 5:00, 8:15	G
3	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN	2:45, 6:00, 9:30	G
4	SUPERMAN RETURNS	1:55, 4:55, 8:05, 11:05	G

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SUPERMAN RETURNS G 12:45,3:50,6:55,10:00	LOVEWRECKED PG13 1:20,3:25	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 G 12:30,3:30,6:30,9:30
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 G 2:10,5:10,8:10	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 G 2:50,5:50,8:50	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 G 1:10,4:10,7:10,10:10

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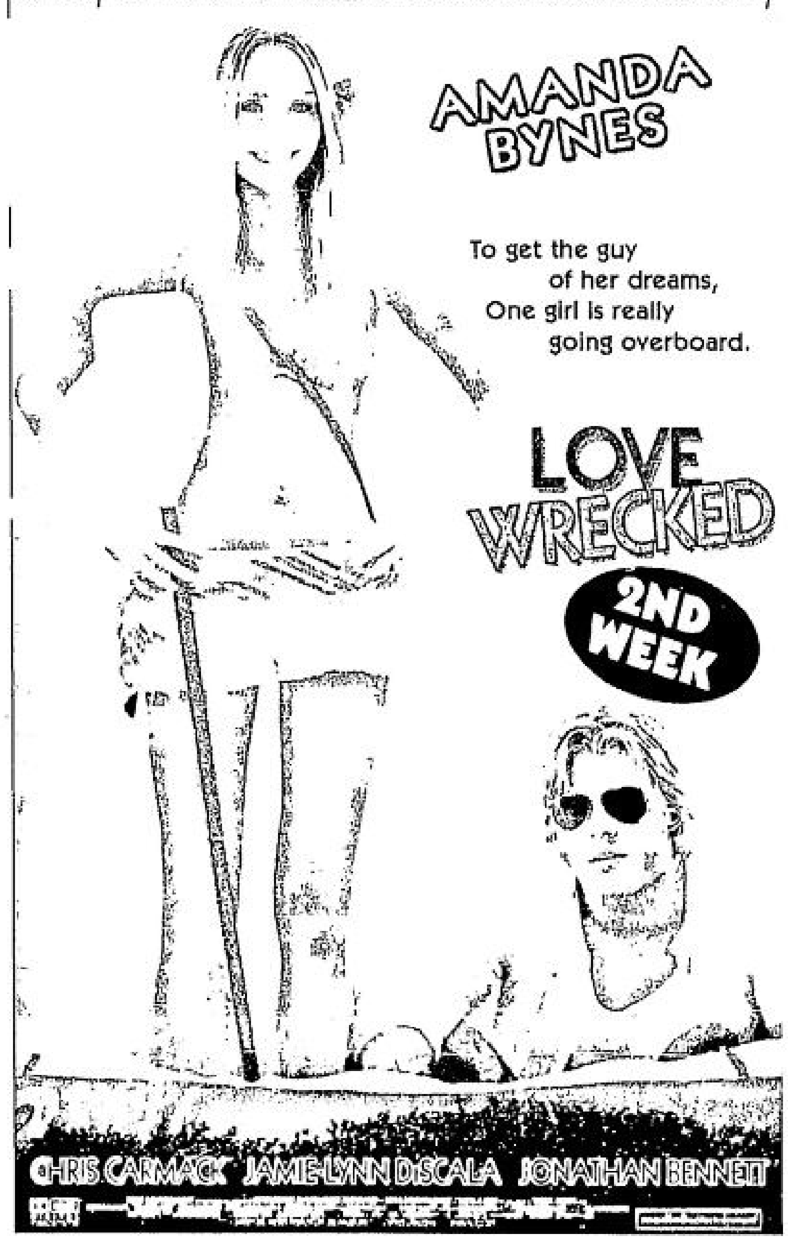
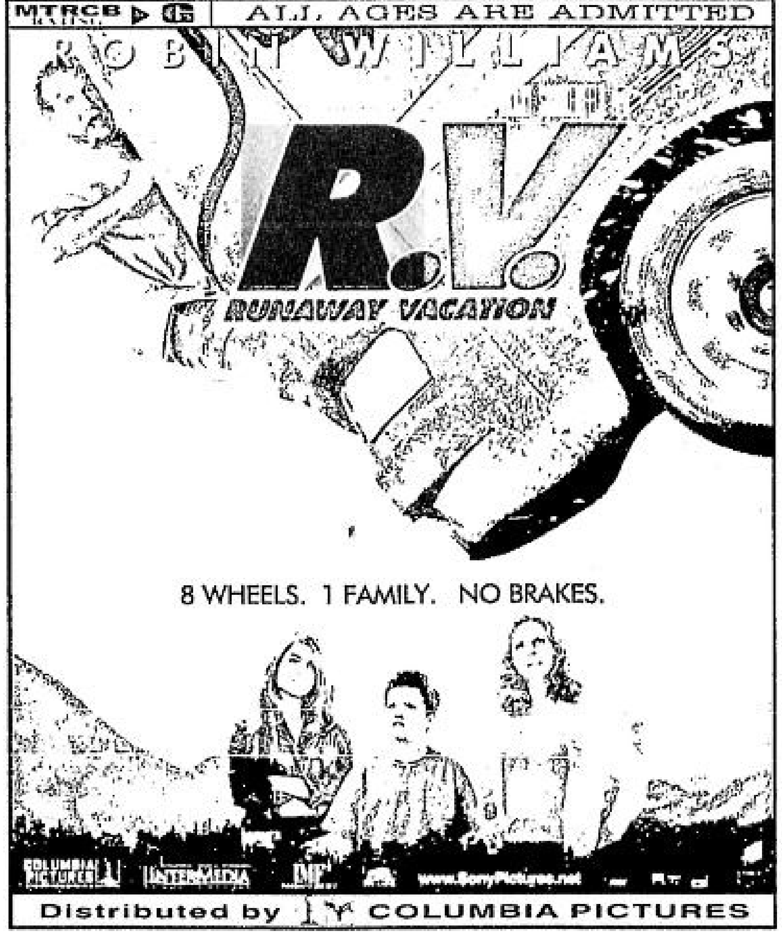
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed when accompanied by a parent or adult

The Funny Girl from She's THE MAN is back in another Hilarious Romantic Comedy



AMANDA BYNES
To get the guy of her dreams, One girl is really going overboard.
LOVE WRECKED
2ND WEEK
CHRIS CARMACK JAMIE-LYNN DiSCALA JONATHAN BENNETT

Take the family on a wild & wacky trip!
THE FUN BEGINS JULY 19
MTRCB RATING G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED



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Famas rivals win bid to halt show

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE AWARDS SHOW OF THE COUNTRY's oldest award-giving body—the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (Famas)—set at the UP Theater in Diliman on July 15, was stopped by a Temporary Restraining Order, according to its president Art Padua.

Padua told INQUIRER Entertainment in a phone interview that the TRO was filed by Famas member Jimmy Tiu, a policeman and leader of a rival faction, and was granted by Judge Felixberto T. Olalia Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 8 on July 13.

Padua claimed that the feud with Tiu resulted from the latter's defeat in the Famas election in 2004.

"On the day I won, he resigned," Padua said. Since then, he added, a series of court cases have been filed to take control of Famas, now in its 54th year.

Padua provided INQUIRER with documents showing that a previous TRO filed by Tiu had been denied by Judge Antonio Eugenio Jr. of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 24 on March 13, and that a July 11 court decision, also under Judge Eugenio, had recognized him [Padua] as Famas president.

Tiu told INQUIRER in a phone interview that his complaint stemmed from the fact that "Famas' registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission had been revoked in 2003."

Wait first

He pointed out: "We should first wait for the revocation to be lifted before handing out awards."

Angel Calso, Padua's associate and producer of this year's Famas show, argued, "Padua is not using the name 'Famas, Inc.,' only 'Famas.' He plans to register Famas as our group's intellectual property."

Padua asserted that his goal was to restore Famas' credibility, "[tarnished] by numerous scandals concerning bribery and vote-buying in the past." He added that Tiu's action might earn the ire of the movie industry and hasten the demise of Famas.

Tiu countered, "We are not trying to kill... we are trying to save Famas."

Padua said he hoped to reschedule the Famas show as soon as the case is settled.

JED Madela

Jed to judge the int'l tilt that he won

By Nini Valera

SINGER JED MADELA WILL RETURN TO the World Championships of the Performing Arts (WCOPA) this year to be one of the judges in the competition.

Last year, Jed, a contract artist of Universal Records, was the runaway champ in the competition, held in Hollywood, California. He won the gold in all the six categories that he joined.

Another Filipino, Rizza Navales, also won in several categories, but it was Jed who prevailed as Grand Champion of the World in the Singing Division.

Hall of fame

"I don't know yet in what category I would be judging," Jed told INQUIRER Entertainment last week. "But [WCOPA] judges are rotated. I will known only when I get there."

The contest will be held sometime in September.

Jed will also be inducted into the WCOPA Hall of Fame for making a sweep of all the 2005 major awards. Plus, he will officially open and close the competition.

"The experience of joining the competition is the main thing," said Jed. "This is what I would like to tell the local artists who are set to join this year. Just enjoy it, and pick up everything you can from the experience. If you don't win, don't be disheartened; you've already won in terms of experience."

More RP entries

Unlike last year when only Jed and Rizza were sent to compete, a lot of artists have been tapped this year to represent the Philippines. Singers Joaquin, Faith Cuneta, Aryanna, Jonalyn Viray, and even the more established Jay-R are said to be joining, according to Jed.

There may not be any cash prize at stake, said Jed, but the honor and prestige are "enough already."

Jed won a $10,000 scholarship to Julliard. He said he would like to enrol in a course there in the future, but that he wasn't ready just now to leave his bustling career.

"Winning the WCOPA has jump-started my career," he admitted. "But I'm still enjoying all the opportunities that a world championship has opened for me here [in the country]. I was already in the scene before I won, but I was just there. After winning, my career seemed to have gone up a few notches. I don't think I could give that up now to go to Julliard."

Booked solid

He revealed that his schedule was booked solid until next year.

Last Thursday and Friday, Jed celebrated his birthday with a concert billed "The Grand Champion of the World in Concert," at Onstage in Greenbelt Makati.

"The funny thing about having a solo concert is, when I invite people to watch, they ask who the guests are," he observed. "It's as if they would watch the show for the guests and not for the performer. Usually, when a newcomer holds his or her first solo show, Regine would be the guest."

But his birthday show guests were nowhere as big as Regine. He explained: "That is one thing I picked up from Lani Misaluscha. When I was still a nobody, she always had me as a guest performer. This was her way of giving new singers a break."

Which was exactly what he did. His guests included his sister, whom he described as "not yet a pro, but can really sing." He also had Gail Blanco, with whom he used to perform in a band, and Lani's sister Carlyn Bayot.

"My mindset now is to give struggling artists a break," he said. "If I didn't get my break, I would be struggling up to now."

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the pussycat dolls

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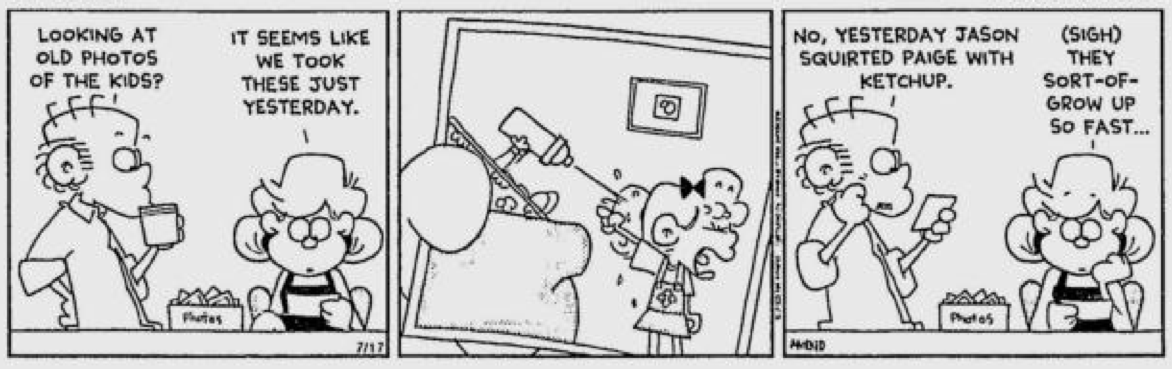
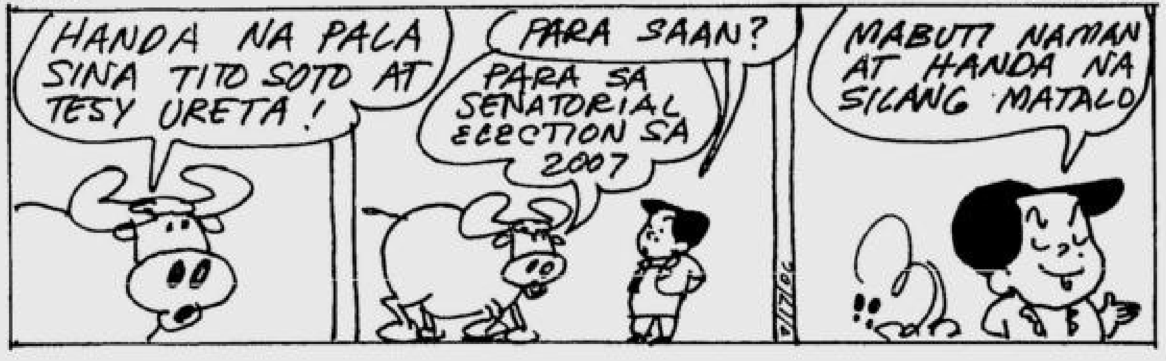
They're hot! They're here!
The Pussycat Dolls are coming to Manila!
Be at the Araneta Coliseum at 8 p.m. on July 28, 2006.
Catch them live!
NOKIA
Connecting People

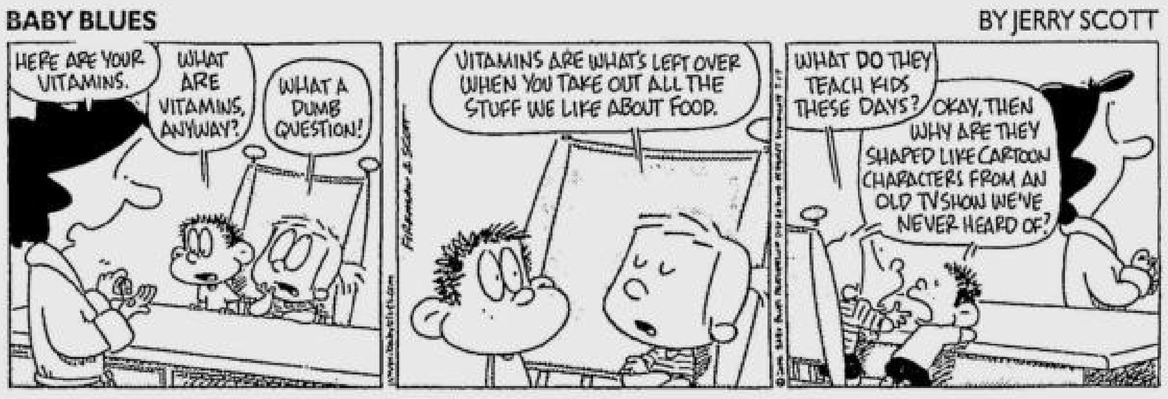
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


LOOKING AT OLD PHOTOS OF THE KIDS?
IT SEEMS LIKE WE TOOK THESE JUST YESTERDAY.
Photos
7/17
NO, YESTERDAY JASON SQUIRTED PAIGE WITH KETCHUP.
(SIGH) THEY SORT-OF-GROW UP SO FAST...
Photos

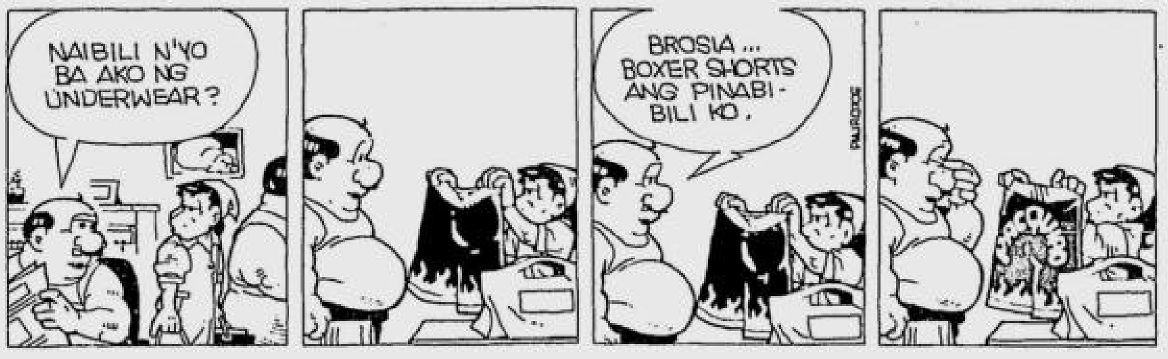
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HANDA NA PALA SINA TITO SOTO AT TESY URETA!
PARA SAAN?
PARA SA SENATORIAL ELECTION SA 2007
MABUTI NAMAN AT HANDA NA SILANG MATALO

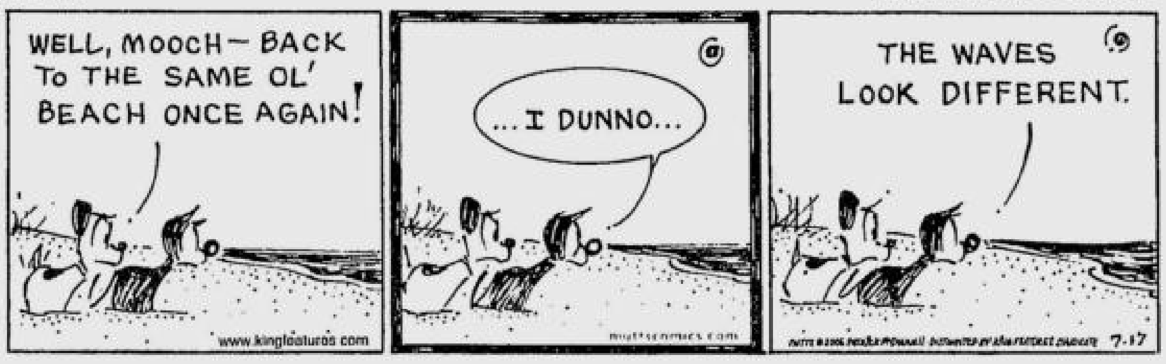
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HERE ARE YOUR VITAMINS.
WHAT ARE VITAMINS, ANYWAY?
WHAT A DUMB QUESTION!
VITAMINS ARE WHAT'S LEFT OVER WHEN YOU TAKE OUT ALL THE STUFF WE LIKE ABOUT FOOD.
WHAT DO THEY TEACH KIDS THESE DAYS?
OKAY, THEN WHY ARE THEY SHAPED LIKE CARTOON CHARACTERS FROM AN OLD TV SHOW WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF?

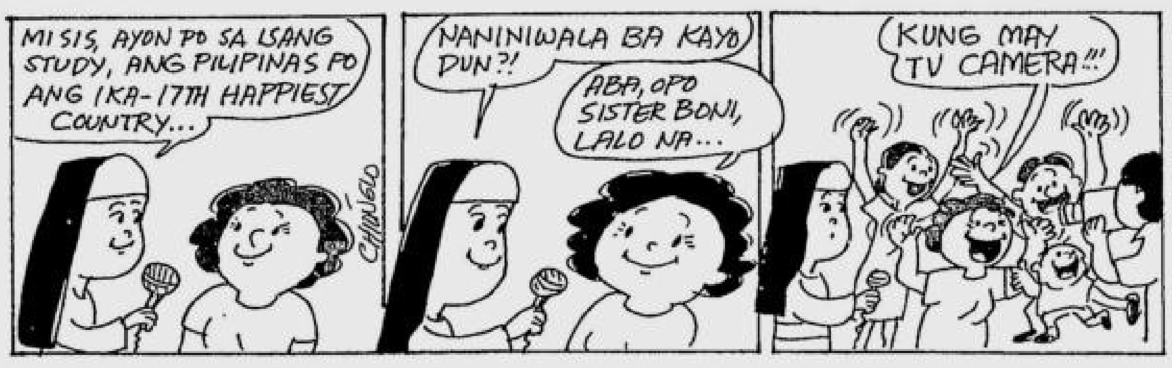
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAIBILI N'YO BA AKO NG UNDERWEAR?
BROSIA ... BOXER SHORTS ANG PINABI-BILI KO.

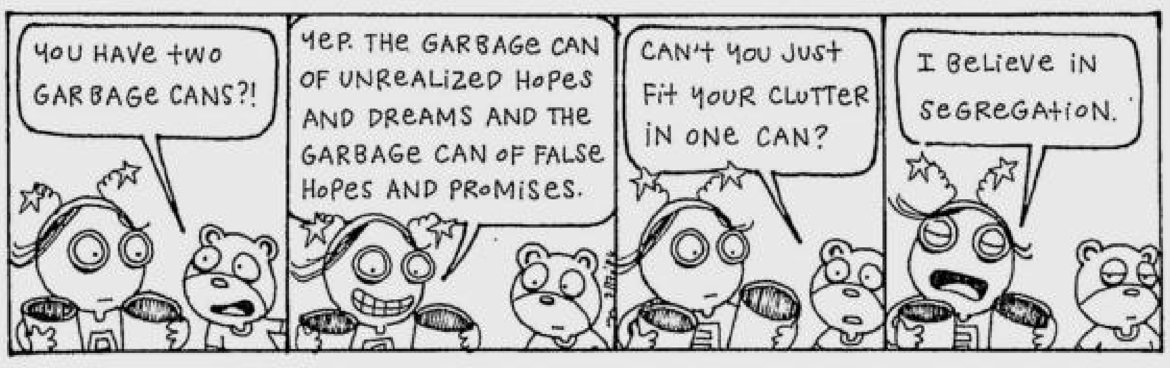
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WELL, MOOCH — BACK TO THE SAME OL' BEACH ONCE AGAIN!
...I DUNNO...
THE WAVES LOOK DIFFERENT.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
7-17

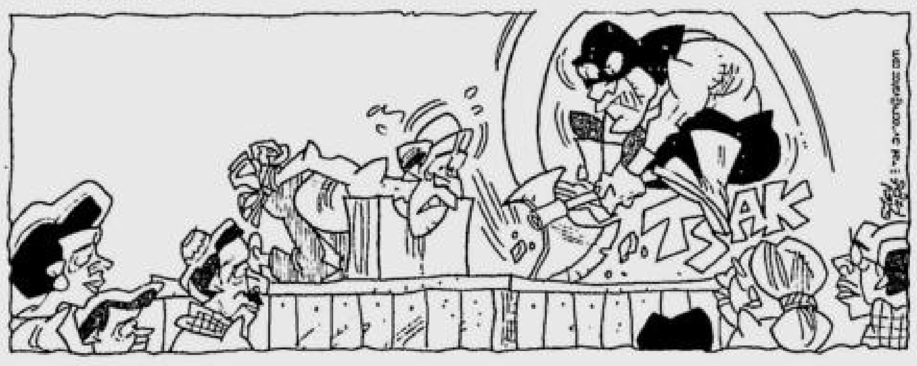
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MISIS, AYON PO SA ISANG STUDY, ANG PILIPINAS PO ANG IKA-17TH HAPPIEST COUNTRY...
CHIONGLO
NANINIWALA BA KAYO DUN?!
ABA, OPO SISTER BONI, LALO NA...
KUNG MAY TV CAMERA!!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

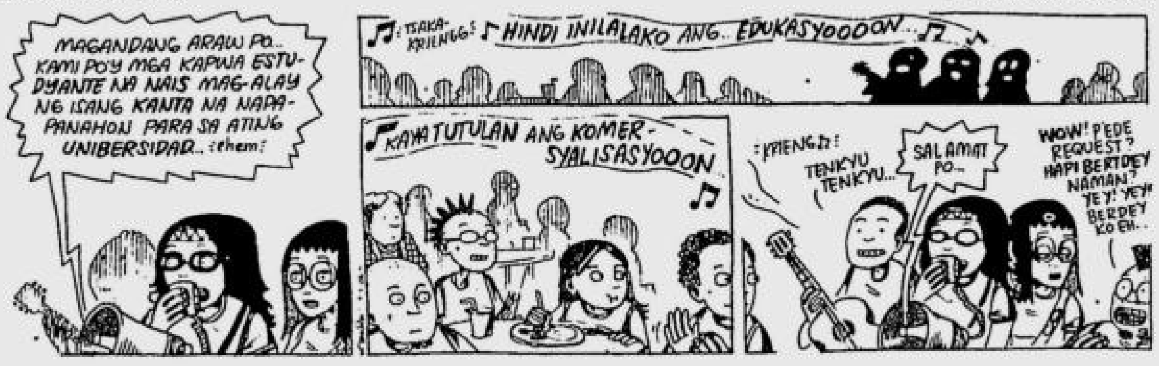

YOU HAVE TWO GARBAGE CANS?!
YEP. THE GARBAGE CAN OF UNREALIZED HOPES AND DREAMS AND THE GARBAGE CAN OF FALSE HOPES AND PROMISES.
CAN'T YOU JUST FIT YOUR CLUTTER IN ONE CAN?
I BELIEVE IN SEGREGATION.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

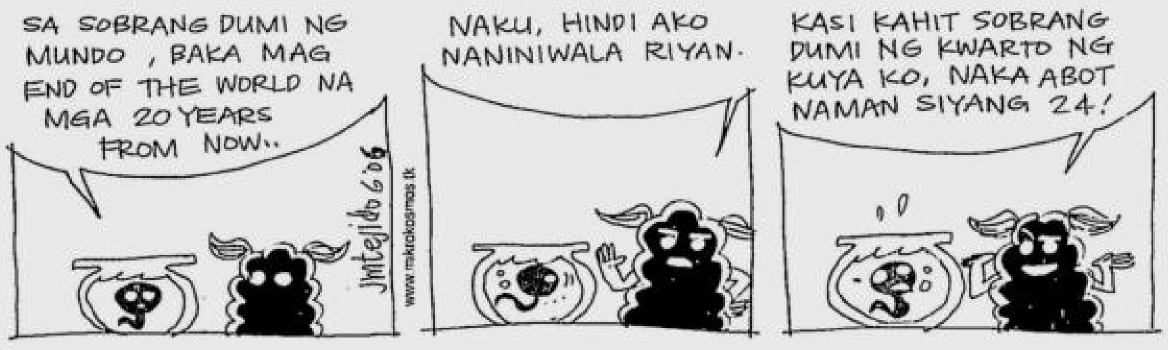


TUMAGAL ANG EXECUTION DAHIL ANG KINUHA NILANG BERDUGO AY DULING

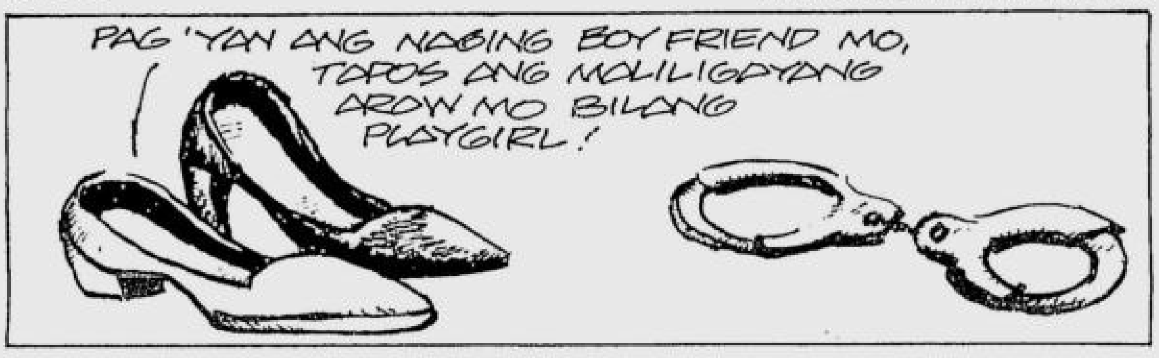
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


MAGANDANG ARAW PO.. KAMI PO'Y MGA KAPWA ESTUDYANTE NA NAIS MAG-ALAY NG ISANG KANTA NA NAPAPANAHON PARA SA ATING UNIBERSIDAD.. :ehem:
:TSAKA-KRIENGG: HINDI INILALAKO ANG.. EDUKASYOOOON..
KAYA TUTULAN ANG KOMER-SYALISASYOOON
:KRIENGG:
TENKYU TENKYU...
SALAMAT PO..
WOW! P'EDE REQUEST? HAPI BERTDEY NAMAN? YEY! YEY! BERDEY KO EH..

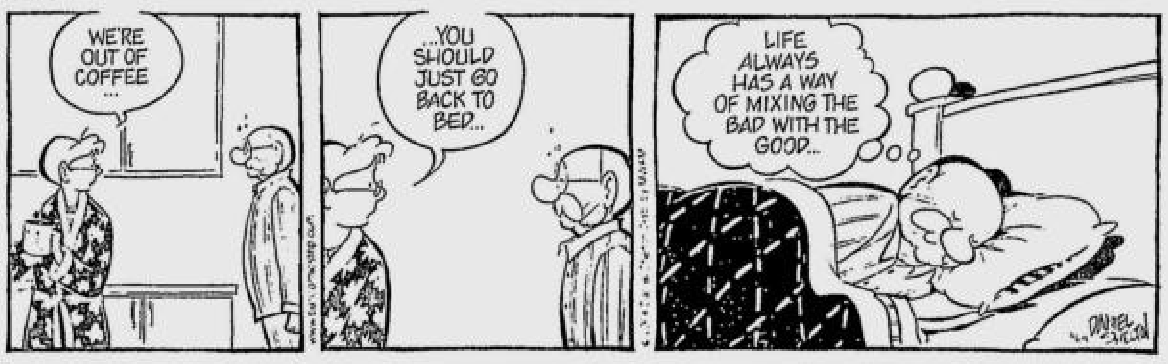
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA SOBRANG DUMI NG MUNDO, BAKA MAG END OF THE WORLD NA MGA 20 YEARS FROM NOW..
JMTejido 6'06
www.mikrokosmos.tk
NAKU, HINDI AKO NANINIWALA RIYAN.
KASI KAHIT SOBRANG DUMI NG KWARTO NG KUYA KO, NAKA ABOT NAMAN SIYANG 24!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PAG 'YAN ANG NAGING BOYFRIEND MO, TAPOS ANG MALIGAYANG ARAW MO BILANG PLAYGIRL!

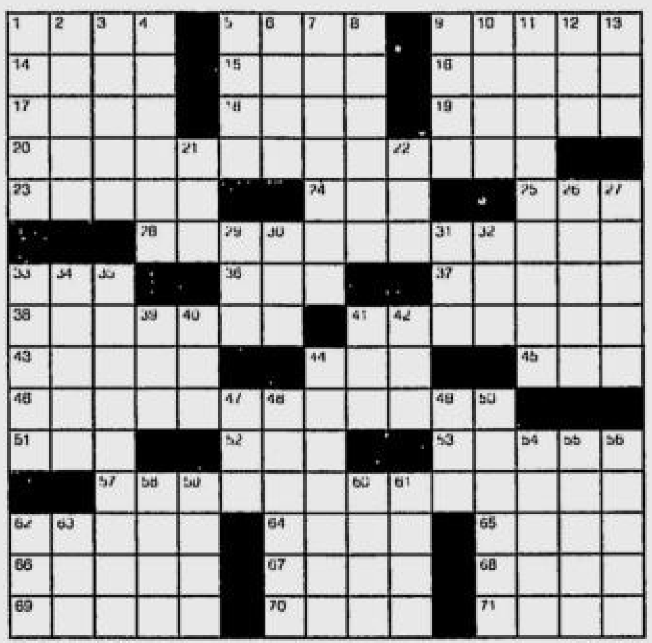
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


WE'RE OUT OF COFFEE ...
...YOU SHOULD JUST GO BACK TO BED...
LIFE ALWAYS HAS A WAY OF MIXING THE BAD WITH THE GOOD...
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Be vexed
5 Part of B.A.
9 Carried on
14 Gobi's location
15 Simpson kid
16 State one's case
17 Mao Tse-__
18 Needle case
19 Spouts off
20 Long-time illustrator in the New Yorker
23 Football great Merlin
24 Schuss
25 6th sense
28 Philly soul singer
33 __ jacet
36 Distress signal
37 With all one's might
38 Sculptor Chillida
41 Like golf balls
43 Stuffed __ (kishke)
44 Actor Silver
45 Last letter of plurals?
46 Author of "Soft Pretzels with Mustard"
51 Peer Gynt's mother
52 Wicked
53 Consume with relish
57 Source of 20A, 28A and 46A namesakes
62 Dashing youth
64 Evening in Pisa
65 Notes of scales
66 Dinner bread
67 Writer Bagnold
68 Suffix for diseases
69 Wheel shafts
70 Command to Fido
71 Oriole home

DOWN
1 DeLuise film
2 Garden-variety
3 Math sign
4 Philly team
5 Assist a crook
6 Cost per unit
7 Platitudes
8 Lousy
9 Interlaced
10 Mimic
11 Carbonated beverage
12 Tolkien creature
13 __ Moines
21 Winter ATV, __-Cat
22 Hopper
26 Clear and blue, e.g.
27 Hangs in the balance
29 Hallucinogenic stuff
30 Tic-tac-toe win
31 Comic-strip crash
32 Ref's relative
33 Hopper of gossip
34 Brainstorms
35 Slider relative
39 Friend of Pierre
40 Far out!
41 Comic Knotts
42 Roadhouse
44 Paltry amount
47 See-ya, in chat-room-speak
48 Brings up
49 Yikes!
50 Dried fruit
54 Govt. bond
55 Wrinkly fruits
56 Sibilant "Yo!"
58 Inactive
59 Porgy's partner
60 Opera highlight
61 Title for Godiva
62 Lingerie item
63 Bagel topper



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

7/17/06

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

U	P	S	E	T	■	T	A	S	M	A	N	S	E	A
N	I	T	R	O	■	I	M	P	O	S	T	U	R	E
C	R	O	I	X	■	S	E	Q	U	E	S	T	E	R
L	A	I	N	I	E	■	R	R	S	■	■	U	M	A
A	N	C	■	N	N	E	■	■	E	S	P	R	I	T
S	H	A	M	■	T	U	B	A	■	C	R	A	T	E
P	A	L	A	V	E	R	E	D	■	R	I	L	E	D
■	■	■	C	O	R	E	Y	H	A	I	M	■	■	■
S	K	I	R	T	■	K	L	E	M	P	E	R	E	R
U	L	N	A	R	■	A	E	R	O	■	D	E	M	O
B	E	S	E	E	M	■	■	E	L	Y	■	M	I	S
S	E	C	■	■	A	B	S	■	E	U	D	O	R	A
I	N	A	M	O	R	A	T	A	■	R	U	R	A	L
D	E	P	A	R	D	I	E	U	■	T	E	S	T	Y
E	X	E	R	T	I	O	N	S	■	S	T	E	E	N

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7/17/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You appear to be self-confident and poised. To be sure, you're ambitious. You have goals, and you intend to achieve them. How you go about this is not necessarily flashy; it is always quietly determined. You believe timing is everything, and you're willing to wait for your moment in the sun. Expect major changes this year (perhaps similar to around 1997).

Birthdate of: Diahann Carroll, actress, Donald Sutherland, actor; Camilla Parker-Bowles, Duchess of Cornwall.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a great day to do something to improve your appearance. You might want to work on your posture, your weight or your wardrobe. (Do anything that helps.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is definitely a day when secrets could come out. If you're lucky, they won't be about you. You might also find answers to old problems that were unsolved.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A friend is powerfully persuasive today. Even though you're very much in control of your own thoughts, you see that this other person has influenced you—and probably for the better.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Research details connected with insurance matters, estates, inheritances, debt, taxes and shared property. You'll find whatever you're looking for. (Be diligent.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): If you research creative projects, you'll get good results today. You might also find a teacher or a talented person to help you achieve what you want to do.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In conversations with others, you might encounter a few strong emotional outbursts. Don't worry; this period of excitement will be brief. (A lot of people are letting off steam today.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's in your best interest to listen to others today. The Moon is opposite your sign, making strong aspects to a number of planets. (You might learn something that you wanted to know.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a great way to start a week off. You can introduce reform or make improvements at work. You have a strong sense of purpose; you want results.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Romantic situations could be explosive today. Just sit on the fence until you know which way the wind is blowing. Don't get involved. Don't overreact.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can make great headway cleaning up certain areas at home today possibly related to bathrooms, garbage and laundry. Get rid of what you don't need. (Be ruthless.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Don't try to persuade others to agree with you today, and don't let others try to do this to you, either. Heated arguments are possible. Just be cool.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You want to put your money to good use today. You want it to be used for a meaningful purpose.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

4	7							5
				7	9	2		6
	5	6		8		1		
	8		1		3			
	9	5		4		8	6	
			9		8		7	
		9		3		5	2	
5		3	4	2				
7							1	3

Difficulty Level ★

7/17

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	8	2	3	1	4	7	5	9
9	5	1	2	7	8	3	4	6
7	3	4	9	5	6	1	2	8
3	2	5	4	8	1	6	9	7
4	7	8	5	6	9	2	3	1
1	6	9	7	3	2	5	8	4
5	1	6	8	9	3	4	7	2
2	9	7	6	4	5	8	1	3
8	4	3	1	2	7	9	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

'RV' not really a fun vacation

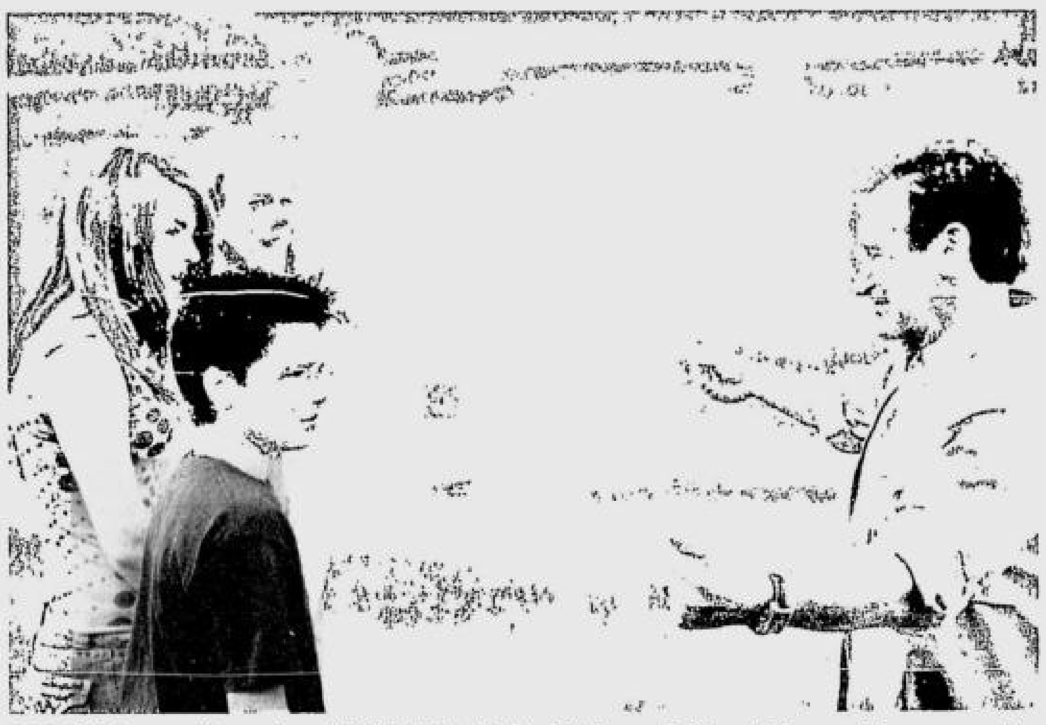
From page A3-4

ably dim and oblivious to the Munros' obvious dislike for them, but they ultimately teach the Munros a thing or two about family and togetherness because, well, sophisticated people don't know everything there is to know about happiness, apparently.

All together now, let's roll our eyes.

"RV" shows how a financially stable family starts to become dysfunctional, but learn from unexpected interaction-with more fulfilled people.

It's not very convincing, however, that Bob's family becomes tight and loving again by the movie's ending, but that's guaranteed and expected, given the premise. The conversion just wasn't very assuring.



FOR ALL its good intentions, "RV" falls flat. Robin Williams, right, not his usual funnyman self.

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THE LAKE HOUSE 1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:30 / 3:30 / 6:30 / 9:30
LOVE WRECKED 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST 12:35 / 1:10 / 3:35 / 4:10 6:35 / 7:10 / 9:35 / 10:10
PLATINUM CINEMA
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00

Ali MALL 5

I WANNA BE HAPPY 2:10 R3 / 1:50 / 4:10 / 6:30 / 8:50
BATAS MILITAR 12:05 R2 / 2:00 / 4:15 / 6:30 / 8:45
SUPERMAN RETURNS 11:30 / 2:30 / 5:30 / 8:30
SEE NO EVIL 1:10 / 3:00 / 4:50 / 6:40 / 8:30
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00
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July 22, Saturday 7:30 pm

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Jason Abalos Iwa Moto Gian Carlos Franzen Fajardo Ketchup Eusebio Glaiza de Castro Katarina Perez
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G1 Glorietta 1	1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	2 SUPERMAN RETURNS	3 I WANNA BE HAPPY	4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST			
G4 Glorietta 4	1 SUPERMAN RETURNS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	3 THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 12:45, 4:00, 7:15, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 INITIAL D	5 UNITED 93	6 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	7 LOVEWRECKED
GB1 Greenbelt 1	1 SUPERMAN RETURNS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST					
GB3 Greenbelt 3	1 THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST 1:00, 4:15 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST 2:15, 5:30, 11:50 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 LOVEWRECKED 1:30, 3:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:45, 4:50, 7:55, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST 1:35, 4:50, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC Alabang Town Center	1 THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	3 SUPERMAN RETURNS	4 LOVEWRECKED	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST		
ACC Ayala Center Cebu	1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	3 SUPERMAN RETURNS	4 SEE NO EVIL			
M2 Market! Market!	1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	2 I WANNA BE HAPPY	3 INITIAL D	4 SUPERMAN RETURNS	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST		

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Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

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CINEMALAYA OPENS TODAY AT CCP

THE WEEK-LONG 2nd Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival opens today at the Main Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay City. Eight full-length feature films are competing for the Best Picture trophy, which will be handed out in an awards show on July 23. Ten filmmakers are competing in the short-film category. Photo shows Cinemalaya officials with the participating filmmakers. From left, first row: Nick Olanka, "Ang Huling Araw ng Linggo" (full-length); Vic Acedillo Jr. and Benji Garcia, "Batad, Sa Paang Palay" (FL); competition director Laurice Guillen-Feleo; Pepe Diokno, "No Passport Needed" (short film); CCP president and festival director Nestor O. Jardin; Jeanne Lim, "No Passport Needed"; festival congress head Nicanor Tiongson; Raz Dela Torre, "Labada" (SF); monitoring committee head Robbie Tan; Jose Emmanuel Taylo, "Kwarto" (SF); Dennis Teodosio, "Gee-Gee at Waterina" (SF); Reggie Gulle, "10:25 Ng Gabi" (SF). From left, second row: Adolf Alix Jr., "Donsol" (FL); Dado Lumibao (partly hidden), "Ngipin ni Doring," (FL). From left, third row: Ron Byrant, "Rotonda" (FL); Margaret Guzman, "Mudraks" (SF); Arah Jell Badayos, "Lima" (FL); Herbert Tiu, "Parang Pelikula" (SF); Milo Tolentino, "Orasyon" (SF); Ma. Isabel Sunshine Matutina, "Puwang." From left, fourth row: Real Florido, Florida Bautista, "Saan Nagtatago Si Happiness" (FL); Michael Sandejas, "Tulad ng Dati" (FL); Reinz Balao, "Sa Silaw" (SF); Jeck Cogama, "Putot" (SF).

RODEL ROTONI

'*Birit*' syndrome compromises child singers' performances

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST JULY 1, THE SECOND SEASON finals of the "Little Big Star" kiddie singing tilt were held on Channel 2. Two boys, Christian and Robert, vied for the "Little" champ title, while four girls—Angellie, Kryssha, Laurice and Dawn, competed for the "Big" category's crown.

We congratulate winners Robert and Angellie, but we must note that the finals were generally compromised by an excessive "*birit*" orientation that practically forced the young contestants to push up the pitch of their arrangements and renditions, in the mistaken yet locally popular notion that "impossibly" high notes impress both jurors and voter-viewers.

Alas, the kids' *birit* renditions strained their voices and lent their performances a desperate note, and this was both unfair and cruel to them.

We wish that local singing tilts in general, and kiddie competitions in particular, would steer clear of the *birit* syndrome, because it gives both singers and viewers a very wrong impression of what excellence in singing should be about.

True, some (most?) Pinoy music fans think that high notes and belting volume are admirable, but they're really barking up the wrong musical tree, because our national fixation on *birit* could injure both singers' vocal cords and listeners' eardrums.

More important, it's shallow, unthinking, knee-jerk-impressionable, and ignores much more important performance factors like interpretation, insight, vocal control, contrast, feeling, individuality—and, uh, intelligence?

It's particularly sad when child singers are compelled to come up with *birit* renditions, because their entire careers could be shunted off into a dead-end street of uncreative "musicality."

Other minus points of the "Little Big Star" season finals:

Some of the jurors weren't really all that credible as expert evaluators of singing talent. And some of them came up with injudicious comments that betrayed their wrong-headed mind-set.

One of them even approvingly noted, "*Matanda siyang kumilos; at a young age, nakakakanta siya ng gano'n!*" Oh, please.

True enough, the finalists were made to dress, look and act like little adults. They were all decked out or dolled up in suits for the boys, and gowns for the girls. It was the "Little Miss Philippines" overdressed syndrome all over again.

And the lyrics of the child singers' songs were too adult for them: "I wanna run to you, I need you here to wipe away my tears"—"*O, giliw, nasaan ka, bakit lumisan ka, paano na ang puso kong nag-iisa?*"—"I can make it through the rain"—"*Langit ang buhay sa tuwing ika'y hahagkan*"—that sort of schmaltzy, smarmy thing.

We criticize these aspects of performance because they give both singers and viewers here wrong-headed notions of what good singing should be.

Kids are especially impressionable in this regard, so greater effort should be made to protect them from the onus of the *birit* syndrome that has made pop-music appreciation in these parts such a consternation.

Feedback

The conclusion of Paul R. Mortel's notes on TV commercial loads:

"About two years ago, a big TV special was heavily plugged to start telecasting at 9:30 p.m. You know what? The telecast actually came in at 10:25 p.m. due to overloading of commercials in the preceding program!

"TV programs are now being plugged to start *pagkatapos ng* (previous program).' It's a pity *na nawala ang ating* sense of time. If they will only abide by the KBP rule (18 commercial minutes per hour), our TV shows can be telecast on time, just like in the past.

"I believe the limit of 18 commercial minutes per hour came about because, in the '60s and '70s, the bulk of TV programs consisted of 'imported' shows ('Bonanza,' etc.) whose program content was only 42 minutes in length, to allow for 18 minutes of commercials. To be factual, the founding fathers of the KBP can be consulted in this regard.

"I remember that, when the KBP was formed, martial law was still in its early years, and the state controlled almost everything. But the KBP opted for self-regulation, and that arrangement went on for years. Everybody was fully aware that the airwaves belonged to the state or to the people, so no one should abused their use.

"In order to solve this problem, all people concerned should sit down and discuss it, remembering that they have a constituency that deserves to be treated fairly—the viewing public."

On the set of 'Donsol'

BEMBOL Roco and Jaclyn Jose play Sid's on-screen parents Fidel and Ligaya.

JACLYN with real-life son Gwen Garimond

CHILD actor Aaron Junatas portrays Sid's brother Ito.

"I'VE SEEN Sid act on TV; He's okay," says director Adolf. "I'm glad he accepted the role."

CHERIE Gil, Sid's real-life aunt, plays a journalist who goes to Donsol to interview townsfolk, accompanied by Angel's character.

ANGEL, as Teresa, has had double mastectomy, so the actress had to bind her chest throughout the filming. With her in photo is Simon Ibarra (Nog), center.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Romy Homillada

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

THE ROLE OF DANIEL, THE lowly Butanding Interaction Officer (BOI), in the independent film "Donsol" was originally meant for actor Marvin Agustin.

In a previous interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Agustin even mentioned his intention to produce "Donsol" for its writer-director Adol Alix Jr.

"Unfortunately, we have had creative differences. He also wanted to fully finance the film, which was not possible because 'Donsol' is an entry to the Cinemalaya film fest," explained Alix. Each Cinemalaya entry is entitled to a P500,000 grant. "In the end, Marvin and I agreed to just come up with another film soon."

Taking the place of Agustin is Sid Lucero, whom Alix described as "very believable as a BIO."

Playing Lucero's on-screen partner is Angel Aquino, who had to cut her hair really short for the role of Teresa, a breast cancer survivor.

"Donsol" will be premiere at the CCP Main Theater on July 19, 6:15 p.m.

'RV' not really a fun vacation

REVIEW

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

WE CAN'T HELP IT.

Whenever we go out to watch a Robin Williams comedy, we expect to see the crazy, hyperactive clown that he is off-cam. No such luck here, in the family-aimed flick "RV (Runaway Vacation)," where Williams is disappointingly restrained as Bob Munro, a diligent father and husband with mixed-up priorities.

Williams doesn't show any hint of his unpredictable comic genius here because the role demands that he be the imperfect, subdued nice guy. That's okay; he's a talented enough actor. But we wish the character at least retained some of Williams' spontaneity. Here, he's just boring.

Gripe aside, "RV" is well-intentioned but lacks subtle humor and coherence. Director Barry Sonnenfeld ("Get Shorty," "Men in Black") could have delivered snappier pacing. Instead, we see telegraphed and painfully slow jokes that eat up most of the movie's running time, making us feel for the unhappy Munros (Williams, Cheryl Hines, JoJo Levesque and Josh Hutcherson) who go on a grueling road trip-vacation using the bulky vehicle.

There's obligatory tension, of course: The uncool dad is ill-prepared for the nitty-gritty of the impromptu break, which is partly a way for Bob to sneak off and attend big company meetings along the way.

Bob's inexperience at driving an RV (recreational vehicle) goes old fast, but gets repeated over and over. We see him accidentally running over garden fixtures, road signs, and the like. And the toilet humor here is just... wow. The RV has a defective sewage disposal hose, so imagine how badly that would go. Gross.

The movie seems to have a grotesque fascination for yucky punch lines, too. For example, a vegetarian character accidentally eats deer organs (which reportedly makes her throw up off-screen). It's understandable that most of the family members go through hell and, oh, do we feel their pain!

But the Munro clan is contrasted with the Gornicke family, a country-crooning Brady Bunch of the RV park community, if you will. Jeff Daniels and Kristin Chenoweth do decently as the dedicated parents of cloyingly earnest and sunshiny kids. They're unbeliev-

RV/ A3-3

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Finance taps NBI in corruption drive

PAL delays decision on new planes

By Daxim L. Lucas

FLAG CARRIER PHILIPPINE AIRlines (PAL) has delayed its decision on which brand and type of wide-bodied aircraft to acquire as part of its plan to boost capacity for trans-Pacific flights.

In a telephone interview, PAL president and chief operating officer Jaime Bautista said the airline's management was still deep in negotiations with representatives of US aerospace giant Boeing Co. and European plane maker Airbus Industrie.

"We will probably be able to make a decision [on the type of aircraft to be acquired] before the end of the third quarter," he said.

The airline is in the process of deciding whether it will acquire four Boeing 777s or four Airbus A340-600s for its routes to the US west coast and to Vancouver, Canada—PAL's most profitable routes.

The PAL chief had initially set the deadline for the decision at the end of the second quarter. The deadline was not met because the airline continued to shop for the best deal from either manufacturer, he said.

PAL/ B4

Lifestyle check on erring Customs, BIR employees

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE WILL TAP THE ASSISTANCE OF the National Bureau of Investigation in conducting lifestyle checks against suspected corrupt officials and employees of revenue-collecting agencies.

Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr. told reporters that the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS), the unit in the DOF tasked with combating corruption, has started exploratory talks with the NBI on how the latter's services could be used in cracking down on erring revenue personnel.

"What we (RIPS) intend to do is to give them (NBI) the names of people that can be placed under investigation. The NBI can be a significant help because investigation is its field of expertise," Mendoza said.

The finance official said RIPS was already preparing the list of people to be investigated. The charter of RIPS allowed it to seek assis-

FINANCE/ B7

IN THIS ISSUE

SC likens bank to Shylock /B5
90% of OFW remittances now sent through banks /B10

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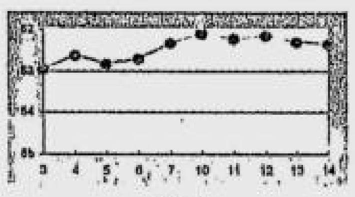

JULY

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Lackluster trade seen

THE STOCK MARKET WILL REMAIN INFLUenced by surging crude oil prices and declining global equities markets following the escalation of hostilities in the Middle East, analysts said.

Fitzgerald Aclan, head of research and strategy at BDO Trust, said investors would be worried with oil prices hovering at a historical high $78 a barrel. "If the situation

LACKLUSTER/ B5

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Negros goes organic

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE BID OF NEGROS ISland to get a piece of the multi-million-dollar organic food industry got a boost from the Department of Agriculture.

At the start of the first Negros Island Organic Farmers Festival here last Thursday, Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban said the DA would help in advertising and marketing the island's organic products.

Pangiban said the DA would also give Negros Island a drier for the processing of its produce.

Earlier, the DA gave the Negros Occidental and Oriental Negros provincial governments P5 million each for their joint organic food venture.

Panganiban said the effort of the two Negros provinces to produce mainly organic food throughout the island was the first in the country and deserved the support of the government, particularly since there was great demand in the world market for organic food.

Oriental Negros Gov. George Arnaiz said the launching of the organic festival heralded the entry of Negros into the organic food market.

"It serves as a springboard toward making our presence felt in the international community and in our participation in the International Farmer's Congress in 2010," he said.

Organic food sales were estimated at $25 million and growing at 10 percent a year.

"That is why we in Negros aim to make our entire island the organic food bowl of Asia," he said. "We have also bound ourselves to prohibit the entry of genetically-modified plants and animals in the island."

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon said the island-wide organic venture would strengthen the relationship between the two Negros provinces.

Repealing the debt penalty

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

"GOVERNMENT CANNOT REPEAL the debt penalty," writes Dr. Edsel Beja Jr., an Ateneo colleague who examines the current state of the public debt in a paper we are writing together.

It seems an apt way to describe the situation, in stark contrast to its similar-sounding counterpart. The debt penalty, indeed, is so quite unlike the death penalty.

For one thing, the death penalty falls on just a few individuals, but the debt penalty falls on all Filipinos without exception.

Many will argue that the former is a necessary instrument of justice; there is nothing just about the latter, falling as it does on people who had absolutely nothing to do with incurring the original debts in the first place. And while it has been possible to lift the death penalty with the stroke of a pen, lifting the debt penalty will take a great deal more than that, and will take a far longer time.

Mind boggling

According to latest calculations, each Filipino has a share of P46,846 of the government's debt burden. This comes from the April figure on the national government debt, which is now within a hair's breadth of P4 trillion (P3.996 trillion, to be exact). And this does not yet include the money owed by government corporations. Counting that, total public sector debt is approaching P6 trillion.

If that figure isn't mind boggling enough, think of it as a chain of P100 bills lined up side by side reaching all the way to the moon and back 12 times. Or if you prefer to stack them up, the pile would be about four kilometers high!

And there's more. Still not counted in the figure are the contingent liabilities, which result from government guarantees on borrowings or commitments of government corporations. That's more than another half trillion (P581 billion).

For example, if the Edsa MRT doesn't get enough passengers to raise the guaranteed minimum annual payment to the private company that built it, we taxpayers step in to make up for the difference. That contingent debt became a real debt that was actually paid in past years.

Growing debt service

In 2005, the outstanding debt of the national government was P3.8 trillion, amounting to about 72 percent of our GDP or total income in the economy. In 2003, the figure was P3.3 trillion, equivalent to 78 percent of GDP at the time.

But total debt service payments--that is, interest and principal amortization combined--rose continuously over the years, from P470 billion in 2003, to P581 billion in 2004, P674 billion in 2005, and P721 billion this year.

Taken against the government's total revenues, debt servicing in 2003 took P3 out of every P4 (75 percent) of revenue. The figure increased to P4 out of every P5 (83 percent) in 2004, and rose yet further to P9 out of every P10 of revenue (89 percent) in 2005.

Our government is like a wage worker whose friendly neighborhood "5-6" lender takes away P9 out of every P10 from his pay envelope on payday.

The good news is that the projected figure for 2006 is back to 75 centavos to a peso of revenue; the bad news is that the reduction is due to new and expanded taxation.

Caught in a pyramid

The data affirm what the Asian Development Bank (ADB) observed last year, i.e. that the government is trapped in a Ponzi (financial pyramid) situation.

It needs to keep borrowing more to meet debt servicing and public expenditure requirements. But for us to be able to borrow more, creditors need to be comfortable about our willingness and ability to pay back, and thus demand that more tax initiatives be implemented.

The debt penalty that Filipinos must carry will therefore continue to be large. Worse, given realities in our tax system, this burden disproportionately falls more heavily on the poor.

Hence, it cannot be stressed enough that aggressive debt management is needed to free up more funds for poverty reduction and health and education, whose shares in the national budget continue to decline.

The government needs to persistently pursue debt-reduction opportunities with creditors to explore conversion of debt service payments into funds for basic public services, poverty reduction programs, and ultimately, economic growth to enable us to "grow out of the debt problem."

But for creditors to be sympathetic, the government must be convincing about its sincerity and long-run stability, which ultimately rests on its legitimacy. Does the present government have all these? What do you think our creditors are thinking?

Blessing in disguise?

If there's one thing good about the 2006 budget not having been passed by Congress, it seems to be the way it has kept the government deficit down.

The government will announce the June fiscal data today, and the expectation is for another budget surplus for the third month in a row, keeping the overall deficit well within target. The government cannot spend as much as it had planned for the year, and that is helping keep new borrowings down.

But as we saw above, that hasn't kept debt service from growing, on which the outlook for rising interest rates and expectations of an oil-price induced weakening of the peso won't help at all. I'm afraid the debt penalty will be with us for quite a bit more time to come.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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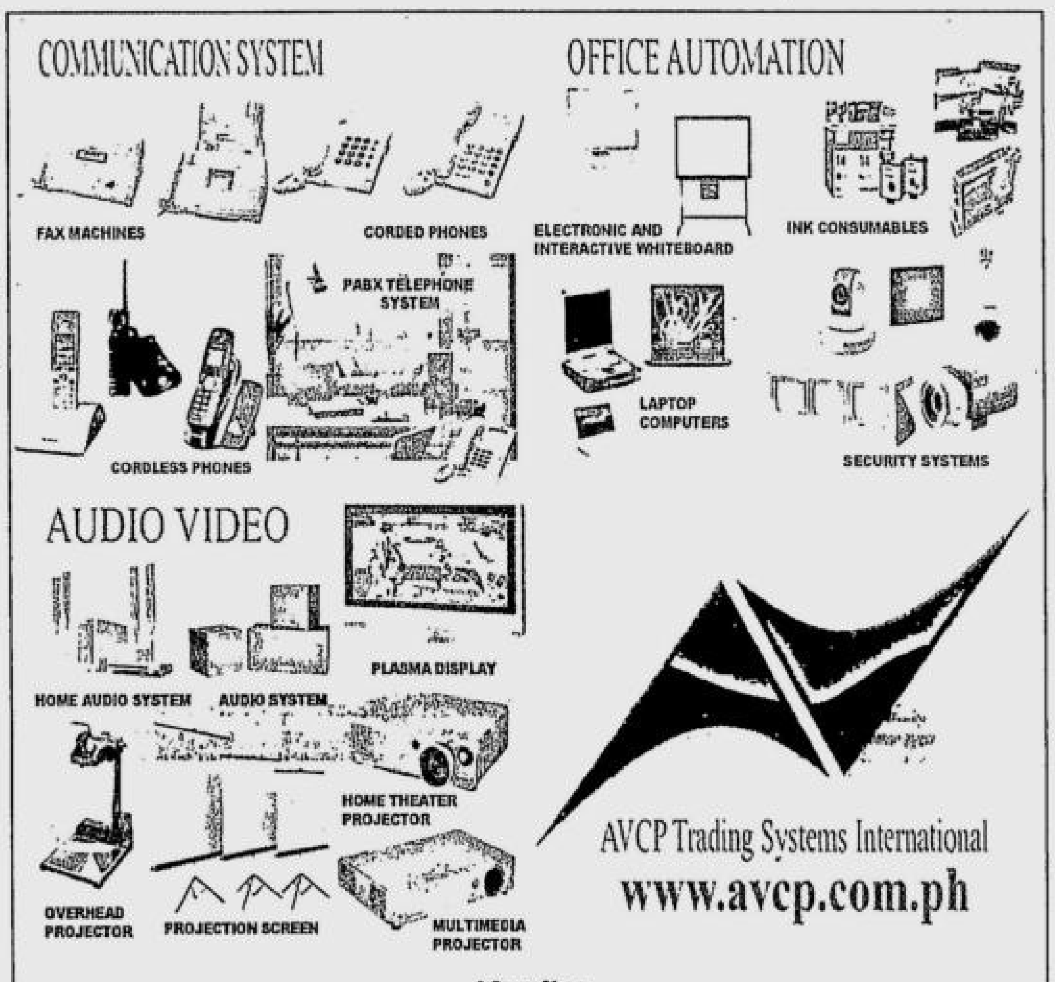

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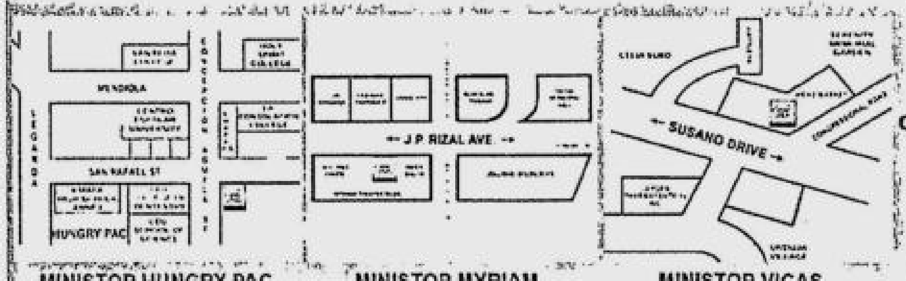

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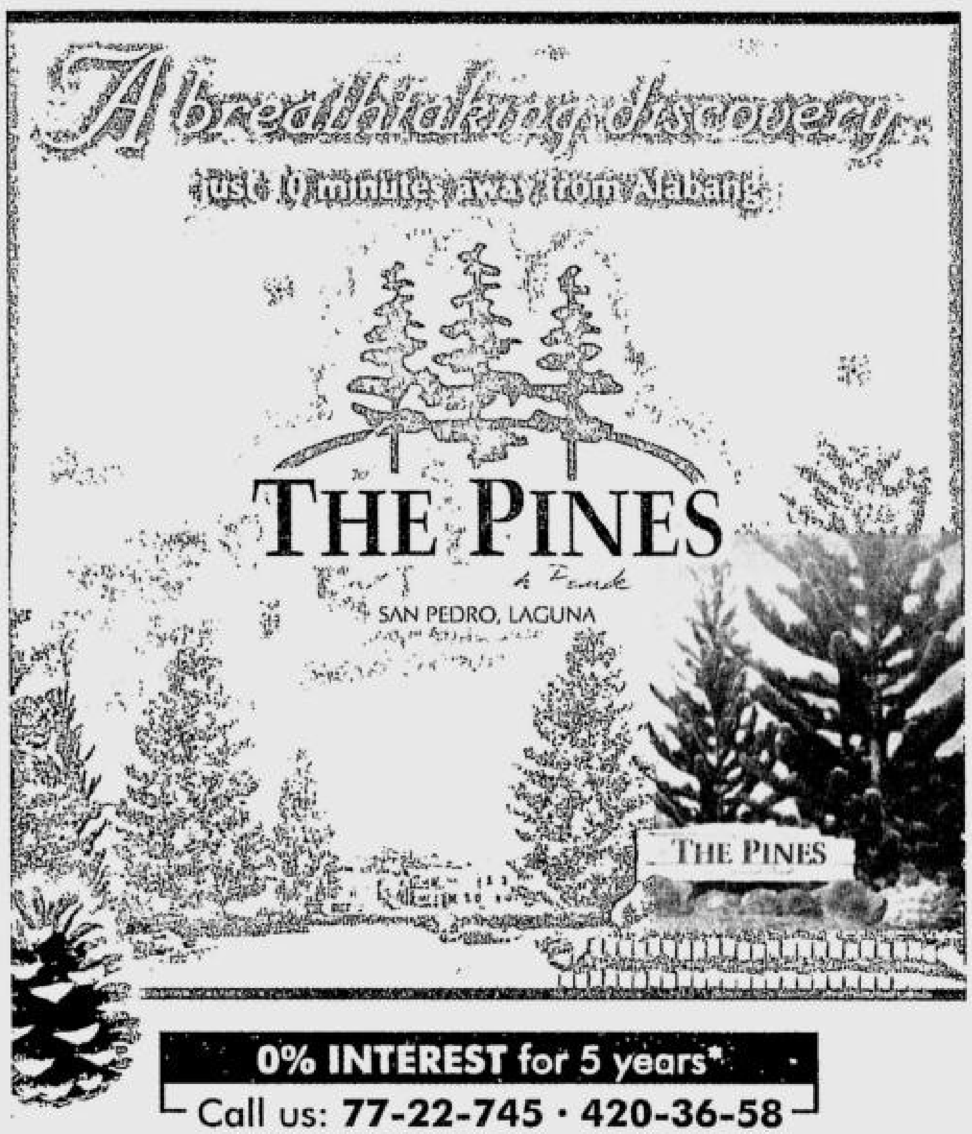

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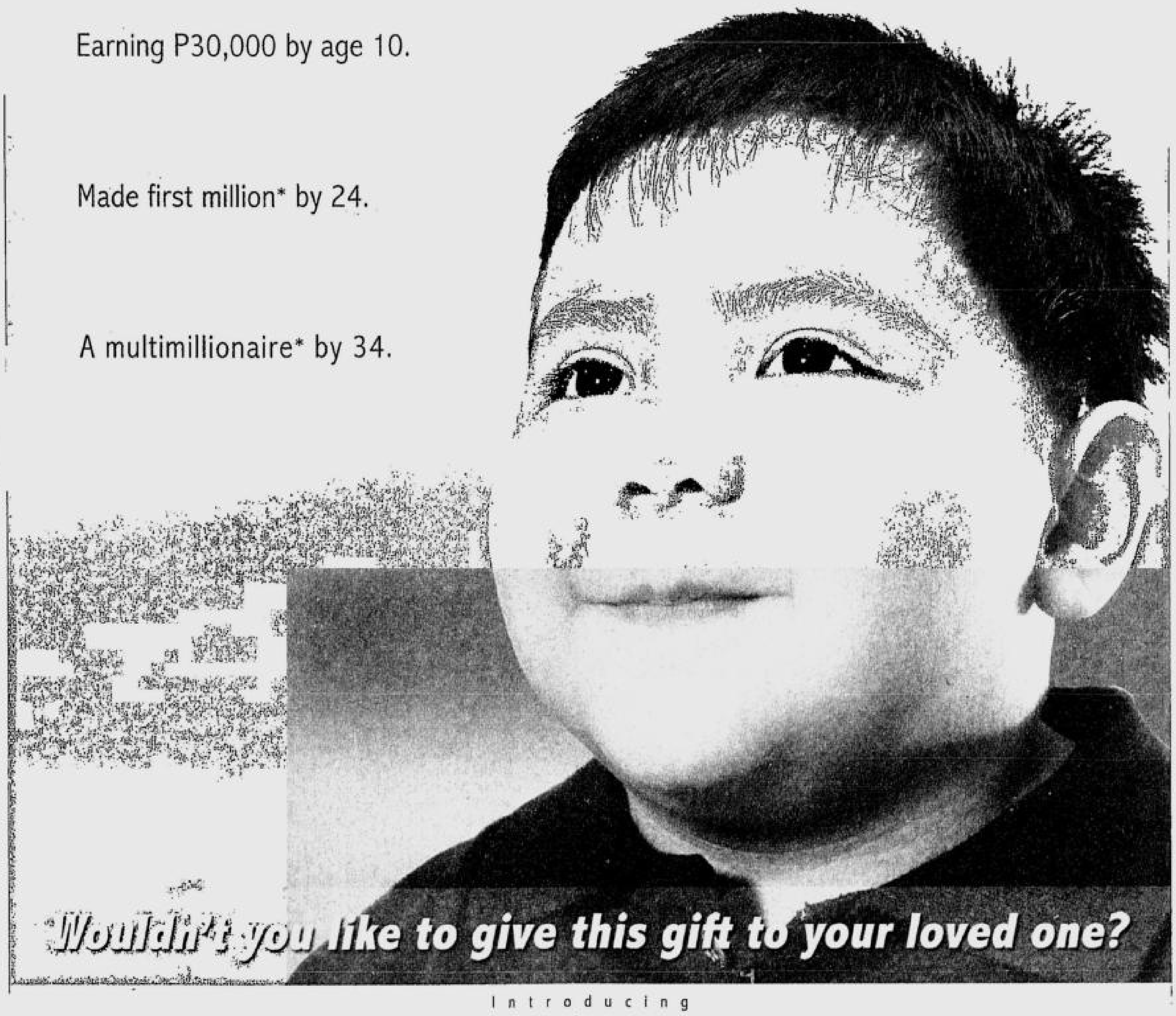

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Capitol Hills	55,000	-
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Euronet eyes ATM firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL ELECTRONIC PAYMENT GIANT Euronet WorldWide Inc. has offered to buy into local automated teller machine consortium BancNet Inc. as part of its bid to enter the fledgling ATM outsourcing business in the Philippines.

BancNet chair and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. director Angelito Villanueva told reporters at the sidelines of the ATM network's 16th anniversary celebration Friday that talks on a possible partnership with Euronet, a global leader for processing secure electronic financial transactions listed on the technology-heavy Nasdaq, started last April.

But last week, Villanueva said Euronet made a firm offer to invest in BancNet and be part of its management team. He said BancNet, the biggest ATM network in the country in terms of membership, would have to consult its member-banks since previous discussions focused only on capital outsourcing on ATMs.

If the proposal would be accepted, he said BancNet would benefit from the infusion of world-class e-banking technology as Euronet would have deeper involvement instead of becoming only a service provider for the ATM network.

"If at all, it's either that we form a new company, a subsidiary of BancNet, and they will put in equity there or directly in BancNet," Villanueva said, noting that member-banks would likely be open to giving Euronet a minority interest.

"We certainly hope that we could put an agreement in place (as soon as possible). Normally it takes months, about six months, depending on the agreement that we may be able to forge," he said.

Across the globe, Villanueva said banks were investing less in expensive fixed assets like ATMs and instead focusing on their core businesses like lending and deposit-taking. He noted that in the United States, for instance, more than half of ATMs were no longer owned by banks but were operated by third-party providers like Euronet.

He said the same trend was dawning in the Philippines and big banks like Metrobank would welcome the entry of third-party ATM providers.

"We (in Metrobank) have more than 700 ATMs. In some areas, we have to have armored cars, pay for security, insurance, and pay people who will do the reconciliation of every thing," Villanueva said.

"What's so glaring right now is it's too expensive to maintain offsite ATMs because shopping malls are charging too exorbitant rentals and driving up the cost. So many banks are investing less in ATMs," he said.

He said a BancNet team would soon visit Euronet's operations in Warsaw, Poland, where it had a tie-up with ABN-Amro on end-to-end e-payment transaction processing.

Euronet is in the business of connecting financial institutions, mobile operators and retailers with an advanced infrastructure for secure transaction processing across 80 countries. It operates the biggest independent European ATM network and the largest shared ATM network in India.

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568.30 sqm.	P3,125,650
571.30 sqm.	P3,142,150
572 sqm.	P3,146,000
595.40 sqm.	P3,274,700
676.50 sqm.	P3,720,750

P5,500/sqm. only

CALOOCAN

MB_CAL031 RSDL LOT
L.A. 292 sqm.
L2 B1 Oakland St.
VISTA VERDE NORTH VILL.
Min. Bid Price: P550,000

MALABON

MB_MLB052 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 290 sqm. F.A. 133 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk. 14 Willow cor.
Creekside St., VICTONETA NORTH SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

MB_MLB054 RSDL CONDO W/PRKG
F.A. 152 sqm.
301 THE YELLOWBELL MANSION CONDO.
No. 12 Yellowbell St., Araneta University Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_MLB055 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,386.70 sqm. F.A. 190 sqm.
Lot 2-A-5, No. 302 M. SIOSON ST., Bgy. Dampalit
Min. Bid Price: P2,700,000

MB_MLB056 INDSL WRHSE
L.A. 3,685 sqm. F.A. 4,839 sqm.
L6 B19 No. 79Engineering Road, POTRERO
Min. Bid Price: P40,000,000

NOVALICHES, QUEZON CITY

MB_QC065 COMML LOT
L.A. 329 sqm.
Lot 1081-M Camarin Road,
BGY. CAMARIN
Min. Bid Price: P1,100,000

PARAÑAQUE

MB_PRQ058 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 119.12 sqm.
Rd. Lot 2, EQUITY HOMES IV, San Isidro
Min. Bid Price: P800,000

MB_PRQ059A TOWNHOUSE / CONDOMINIUM
F.A. 193.87 sqm.
Unit Q Tropicana Villa Condo.,
Quirino Ave., Brgy. Tambo
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

MB_PRQ059B TOWNHOUSE / CONDOMINIUM
F.A. 193.87 sqm.
Unit R Tropicana Villa Condo.,
Quirino Ave., Brgy. Tambo
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

PASAY

MB_PSY062 RSDL LOT W/ IMPROVEMENT
L.A. 579 sqm. F.A. n/a
Lot no 208-F, F. Sanchez St.
Bgy. 82, Zone 10,
SAN RAFAEL DIST.
Min. Bid Price: P5,500,000

PATEROS

MB_PAT084 COMML / RSDL BLDG
L.A. 208 sqm. F.A. 808 sqm.
Lot 11 Blk. 7, Jasmin St.,
STO ROSARIO SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P3,500,000

ANGONO, RIZAL

MB_RIZ081 INDSL WRHSE
L.A. 15,384 sqm. F.A. 1,044 sqm.
LOT 3-A-3 DON MARIANO SANTOS AVE.
Min. Bid Price: P10,000,000

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

MB_RIZ072 RSDL LOT
L.A. 422 sqm.
L29 B7 Apo cor. Banahaw Sts.
TOWN & COUNTRY HILLS
Min. Bid Price: P850,000

MB_RIZ076 RSD'L. LOT
L.A. 576 sqm.
L1 B9 Michigan Bend cor.
Arkansas St., PALOS VERDES EXEC. VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P1,100,000

BINANGONAN, RIZAL

MB_RIZ074 INDSL WRHSE
L.A 1,200 sqm. F.A. 934 sqm.
Along Provincial Road
BGY. CALUMPANG
Min. Bid Price: P5,350,000

CAINTA, RIZAL

MB_RIZ080 4STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 256 sqm. F.A. 968 sqm.
L6 B7, Maganda St.,
RIVERSIDE SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P4,000,000

VALENZUELA

MB_VAL082 RSDL LOT W/ IMPRVT
L.A. 120 sqm. F.A. n/a
Lot 5 BGY. BIGNAY
Min. Bid Price: P3,000,000

MB_VAL083 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 345 sqm. F.A. 154 sqm.
Lot 2779-G-5, No. 18 G. Cruz St.
ANGELES SUBD.
Bgy. Dalandanan, Bo. Pasolo
Min. Bid Price: P1,400,000

MB_VAL086 INDSL WRHSE
L.A. 8,935 sqm. F.A. 2,158 sqm.
Lot 306-B-2-B Alarcon St.,
Sitio Sto. Rosario, BGY. MAISAN
Min. Bid Price: P20,000,000

CALATAGAN, BATANGAS

MB_BAT001 RSDL / AGRI-LOT
L.A. 17,563 sqm.
(near Bucal Elem. Schl)
Lot 26-E, Brgy. Bucal, CALATAGAN
Min. Bid Price: P5,300,000

LIPA CITY, BATANGAS

MB_BAT002 AGRI-LOT
L.A. 16,742 sqm.
Lot 11395, Provincial Rd.
(going to Padre Garcia)
BGY. ANTIPOLO DEL SUR
Min. Bid Price: P5,100,000

MB_BAT 003 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 248 sqm. F.A. 466 sqm.
Lot 5 Subd. Road
LOBRIN SUBD., Bgy. Sico
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000

ANGAT, BULACAN

MB_BUL015 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 2,157 sqm. F.A 1,450 sqm.
(Near Sun Jin Meats)
BGY. PULONG YANTOK
Min. Bid Price: P3,500,000

BALAGTAS, BULACAN

MB_BUL005 COMM'L LOT
L.A 5,555 sqm.
(near "THE MARKET PLACE" Bldg.)
LOT 220-D, BGY. BUROL 1ST,
Min. Bid Price: P14,000,000

BALIUAG, BULACAN

MB_BUL021 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 392.50 sqm. F.A 332.94 sqm.
No. 797, Dr. Gonzalez St.,
BGY. SABANG
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_BUL023 24-UNIT APTMNT
L.A. 2,814 sqm. F.A. 2,040 sqm.
Bgy. Concepcion (near Mun. Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P9,500,000

MB_BUL022 COMML LOT
L.A. 3,599 sqm.
BGY. CONCEPCION
Min. Bid Price: P8,500,000

PAOMBONG, BULACAN

MB_BUL020 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,499 sqm. F.A. 811.4 sqm.
Lot 66 Prov'l Road,
Bgy. Poblacion, PAOMBONG
Min. Bid Price: P5,500,000

MARILAO, BULACAN

MB_BUL004 AGRILOT
L.A. 18,611 sqm.
(near Dolmar Subd.)
Rufino Espiritu St.
Lot 3833-C-5, BGY. LOMA DE GATO
Min. Bid Price: P5,000,000

MEYCAUAYAN, BULACAN

MB_BUL006 INDSL LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
(near Bancal Elem. Schl)
BANCAL ROAD, Bgy. Bancal
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_BUL008 INDSL WRHSE
L.A. 3,330 sqm. F.A. 1,817 sqm.
No. 13 Prov'l. Road,
BGY. HULO (near Mun. Hall)
Min. Bid Price: P7,500,000

MB_BUL013 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 252 sqm. F.A. 521 sqm.
No. 12 (near NLEX Meycauayan Exit)
Corinthian St., MT. CARMEL SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P2,250,000

SAN JOSE DEL MONTE, BULACAN

MB_BUL027 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 720 sqm F.A. 264 sqm.
Magenta St., PECSONVILLE SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_BUL028 28-UNIT APTMT
L.A. 655 sqm F.A. 500 sqm.
Canary St., cor. Silver /
Nawasa Rd., PECSONVILLE SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

SAN RAFAEL, BULACAN

MB_BUL007 INDSL LOT w/ Bldg
L.A. 6,000 sqm. F.A. 1,029 sqm.
Lot 1968-D-1 Poblacion Road,
BGY. CAPIHAN (Near Villa del Carmen Resort)
Min. Bid Price: P5,600,000

CARMONA, CAVITE

MB_CVT034 GOLF ESTATE RSD'L LOT
L.A. 1,091 sqm.
Lot 19 Blk. 19 MANILA SOUTHWOODS Ph3.
Bgy. Cabilang Baybay
Min. Bid Price: P4,900,000

DASMARIÑAS, CAVITE

MB_CVT0035 RSDL LOT
L.A. 400 sqm.
L5 B5 Phase IV, Wheat Road
ORCHARD RSD'L ESTATE SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P800,000

IMUS, CAVITE

MB_CVT040 17 UNITS TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 1,890 sqm. F.A. 1,735 sqm.
LOT 2 MEDICION RD.,
Bgy. Medicion 2nd
Min. Bid Price: P14,500,000

NAIC, CAVITE

MB_CVT036 VARIOUS RSDL LOT
L.A. 23,626 sqm.
UNIWIDE SALES COASTAL CITY
Bgy. Timalan, Naic, Cavite
Min. Bid Price: P21,300,000

TRECE MARTIREZ, CAVITE

MB_CVT037 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 8,641 sqm.
SHERWOOD HILLS RSD'L. ESTATE & GOLF COUNTRY CLUB
Min. Bid Price: P10,500,000

CABUYAO, LAGUNA

MB_LGN045 COMM'L. LOT
L.A. 520 sqm.
LOT 6943 NO. 243,
J.P. RIZAL ST., Poblacion
Min. Bid Price: P4,700,000

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA

MB_LGN049 RSDL LOT
L.A. 872 sqm.
Lot 36 to 38, Austin &
Montessa St. SOUTH PEAK II
Min. Bid Price: P2,700,000

MB_LGN051 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 521 F.A. 443 sqm.
Lot 16, Blk. 1 Sampaguita Ave.,
SAMPAGUITA VILL.
Min. Bid Price: P2,100,000

CABIAO, NUEVA ECIJA

MB_NE092 RSDL LOT
L.A. 950 sqm.
LOT 8 BLK. 7, COR. RD LOT 2
& LOT 4, BGY. STA. RITA
Min. Bid Price: P665,000

MB_NE104 RSDL / COMML BLDG.
L.A. 1,048 sqm. F.A. 788 sqm.
LOT 27 BLK. 5 OLONGAPO-GAPAN ROAD cor Road lot 2,
Bgy. Sta. Rita
Min. Bid Price: P2,400,000

MB_NE108 INDSL LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 490 sqm.
Lot 21-A-1 Along Prov'l Rd.
Bgy. Parista, LUPAO
(San Jose City -Lupao Rd.)
Min. Bid Price: P800,000

CABANATUAN, NUEVA ECIJA

MB_NE087 AGRI-LOT w/ POULTRY HOUSES
L.A. 20,000 sqm. F.A. 2,363 sqm.
Lot 3890-C, BGY. CABU
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_NE089 RSDL LOT
L.A. 450 sqm. (various TCT)
AGL HEIGHTS PHASE. II
Bgy., Caalibangbangan
Min. Bid Price: P800,000

MB_NE090 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 360 sqm.
No. 596 MABINI STREET
Min. Bid Price: P4,000,000

MB_NE101 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 228 sqm. F.A. 199 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk. 6, Ubas St., VILLA BENITA SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P1,000,000

MB_NE106 RSDL. / INDSL LOT
L.A. 11,151 sqm.
Lot 747-I-2-C-3 Bgy. Kalidkid-
Fort Magsaysay Rd. KALIDKID SUR
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

SAN JOSE CITY, NUEVA ECIJA

MB_NE091 RSDL. LOT
L.A. 736 sqm.
San Pedro Rd., (now Javaldi St.)
CURAMEN SUBD., Brgy. Sibut
Min. Bid Price: P860,000

MB_NE095 RSDL LOT
L.A. 229 sqm.
L20 B5 # 1682 Sanchez Ave.,
ST. CECILIA VILLAGE
Min.Bid Price: P350,000

MB_NE102 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 442 sqm. F.A. 185 sqm.
Lot 22 Cervantes St.,
SAN JOSE CITY
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

LUCENA CITY, QUEZON PROVINCE

MB_QP114 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 119 sqm. F.A. 117 sqm.
Lot 3122-B No. 4 Granja St.
Min. Bid Price: P2,000,000

MB_QP116 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 328 sqm. F.A. 216 sqm.
Rd. Lot 1 SACRED HEART SUBD
Bgy. Gulang-gulang
Min. Bid Price: P1,200,000

MB_QP0119 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 374 sqm. F.A. 278 sqm.
L31 B3 Loreta St.
CAPITOL HOMESITE SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P750,000

MB_QP120 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 270 sqm. F.A. 292 sqm.
Cecilville St., MARILAG SUBD.
Bgy. Gulang-Gulang
Min. Bid Price: P1,400,000

MB_QP121 9UNITS APRT BLDG
L.A. 124 sqm. F.A. 462 sqm.
Lot 3039-A Barcelona St.
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

ALL PROPERTIES FOR SALE IS AN "AS IS, WHERE IS BASIS" PROPERTIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGES WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. THE BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT AT ANYTIME TO PULL OUT, TO CORRECT ERRORS IN PRICES, TERMS, DETAILS & STATUS OF THE PROPERTIES IN THE EVENT OF DISCREPANCIES WITH THE RECORDS.

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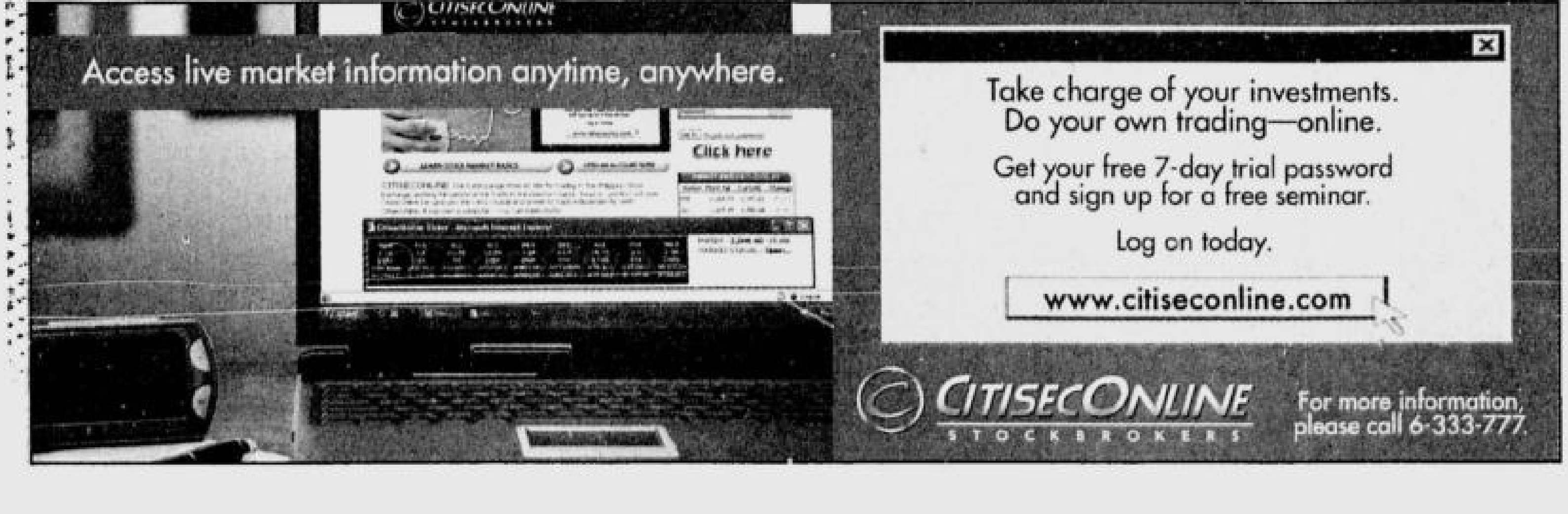
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 14, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31	31.5	31	31.5	72,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49.5	50	49	49.5	903,700
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	10,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	73.5	74	73.5	74	89,900
International Exch. Bank	42	42	42	42	2,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35	35	34.5	35	1,841,800
Philippine National Bank	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	26,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	25,600
Security Bank Corp.	46	46	44	45	271,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	43	43	43	43	700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.64	1.66	1,747,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	31	31	31	31	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1640	1610	1630	750
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	211	212	211	212	1,250
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2000	2000	1995	2000	2,010
Ivantage Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,250,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	45	41,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp	45	45.5	45	45	475,100
Manila Electric Co. A	15	15	15	15	26,600
Manila Electric Co. B	24	24.25	24	24	1,719,200
Manila Water Co. Inc	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	4,906,000
Petron Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.8	3.8	6,220,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	170,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	30,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	32	797,500
Pancake House Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	90,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.95	3	2.95	3	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	66	65	66	48,900
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	71.5	71	71.5	111,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	20	197,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.25	10,420,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	2,068,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	20,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	20,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	310,000
CHEMICALS					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1	1	1	1	15,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1	1	1	1	100,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities, Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.08	0.0825	7,300,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	400,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	402.5	402.5	392.5	392.5	48,790
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	770,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.84	2,698,000
APC Group, Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	320,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.91	0.93	680,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	6,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	23,300
Benpres Holdings Corp	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	804,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	190,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.7	85,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	6.2	6.2	5.8	6.2	418,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.55	2,500,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	800,000
SM Investments Corp.	213	213	210	210	17,960
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	27,533,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.36	0.32	0.36	100,000
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	3,138,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.08	2.2	2.08	2.2	27,231,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	1,580,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	1,400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.26	4,551,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	10,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	20,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	800,000
City & Land Developers	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	1,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	340,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	5,094,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,870,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	186,600
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	50,000
SM Development Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	31,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.7	911,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	50,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	5,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	878,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	960	960	950	950	13,920
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.25	3.4	1,120,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1900	1905	1845	1860	111,360
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	300,000
Ionics Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.049	0.048	0.049	2,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	60,000
Philweb Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	14,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	150,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14.5	14.5	13.75	13.75	123,400
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	1,555,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	150,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	250,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc	3	3	3	3	10,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	61,000
Paxys Inc.	11	11	11	11	7,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3.55	3.55	3.35	3.4	1,448,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	3.4	3.45	3.35	3.4	1,304,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	28,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.6	273,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	13,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	1,160,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	371,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	57,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	60,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.1	4.15	4	4.1	3,241,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.1	7,320,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	27	27	3,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,640,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	950,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	510,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	17,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	379,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	357,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	148,500
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.25	59,000

CURRENCIES

July 16, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.787836	1.000000	52.2400
Japan	Yen	0.006830	0.008669	0.4529
United Kingdom	Pound	1.452218	1.843300	96.2940
Hongkong	Dollar	0.101317	0.128602	6.7182
Switzerland	Franc	0.640830	0.813405	42.4923
Canada	Dollar	0.696276	0.883783	46.1688
Singapore	Dollar	0.497308	0.631233	32.9756
Australia	Dollar	0.593876	0.753807	39.3789
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.089916	2.652731	138.5787
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.210061	0.266631	13.9288
Brunei	Dollar	0.495743	0.629247	32.8719
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000110	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020809	0.026413	1.3798
UAE	Dirham	0.214506	0.272272	14.2235
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.269300	66.3082
Brazil	Real	0.356955	0.453083	23.6691
Denmark	Kroner	0.134029	0.170123	8.8872
India	Rupee	0.017068	0.021664	1.1317
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215403	0.273411	14.2830
Mexico	New Peso	0.071213	0.090391	4.7220
New Zealand	Dollar	0.487191	0.618391	32.3047
South Africa	Rand	0.109727	0.139276	7.2758
Korea	Won	0.000830	0.001054	0.0551
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024209	0.030729	1.6053

PAL delays . . .

From page B1

Bautista said both Boeing and Airbus have local representatives who were in regular communication with PAL on the prospective orders, although he declined to disclose which manufacturer the Lucio Tan-owned airline favored at present.

Instead, he noted that the airline continued to use as its main criteria the fuel and maintenance efficiency of either type.

"We are looking at the technical specifications, but both planes are very good," he said.

Industry observers note that the Boeing 777 may have a slight edge in terms of fuel and maintenance efficiency because it uses only two engines, as opposed to the four-engine Airbus A340.

On the other hand, PAL already has four A340s in its fleet and its pilots, ground maintenance crew are already familiar with its workings—a fact that translates into cost savings if PAL chooses the type.

"There is such a thing as equipment commonality when considering aircraft acquisition," the airline president said.

Once PAL decides on either Boeing or Airbus, Bautista said that he expected the first aircraft to be in service "within two years."

"It takes about 18 months to build one plane, so this will take time," he explained, adding that the four aircraft being considered will not be delivered to PAL all at once, but will instead be phased in as they are built.

The PAL chief said earlier that the new aircraft would be acquired on a "dry lease" basis with an option for the airline to buy them at the end of the lease contract.

PAL has a fleet of 32 aircraft, representing a mix of wide-bodied jets and smaller regional planes for domestic and short-haul international operations.

SC likens bank to Shylock

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN AS many years, the Supreme Court has taken to task Banco Filipino for charging "unconscionable" interest rates on its borrowers.

The SC First Division, chaired by Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, noted that the savings bank had charged more than 60-percent interest a year on a 1979 loan that was supposed to carry an interest rate of no more than 21 percent.

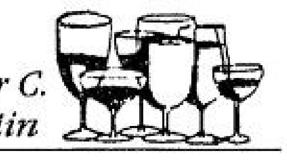
Panganiban, who used to add Biblical quotes in his Supreme Court pleadings when he was still a Banco Filipino lawyer, did not take part in the deliberations, allowing Justice Romeo Callejo Sr. to write the decision who, this time, quoted William Shakespeare instead.

Callejo noted that the original loan of P400,000 taken by spouses Antonio and Elsie Diaz of Davao City had already been taken over and paid P25.1 million by businessmen James and Francisco Gaisano.

Still, Banco Filipino objected to the release of a P1.03-million check consigned by the Diaz couple to a Makati court, claiming that the Diaz check should still be applied as partial payment to their loan, which the bank estimated to have reached, net of other previous payments, more than P26.3 million by end-1998.

The Court of Appeals had already characterized Banco Filipino's more than 60-percent interest rate as "excessive, iniquitous, unconscionable, and exorbitant," Callejo noted, likening the thrift bank to Shylock, the moneylender in the Shakespearian play "The Merchant of Venice," who asked for a literal pound of flesh as payment for the money he lent.

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

Callejo agreed with the appellate court that since December 1991 when the check was consigned, Banco Filipino had refused to even acknowledge that the check was to be used as partial payment to whatever the Diazes owed.

"Indeed, absent the prior acceptance by petitioner bank or a judicial declaration that the consignation had been properly made, the (Diazes) remain the owners of the sum," Callejo said.

In December 2004, the SC First Division, chaired by then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, also declared that the 3-percent monthly penalty surcharge that Banco Filipino had imposed on a 1978 loan, this time obtained by the Ybañez family of Cebu, was in violation of the then Usury Law.

(Disclosure: For having written a series of critical columns, Cocktales is now a defendant to a P3-billion libel suit filed by Banco Filipino.)

Money-go-round

- MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay is working on a plan to install free Wi-Fi coverage, initially in select schools and buildings and eventually throughout the city, in time for Christmas.
- THE FORBES Park Association is lobbying City Hall to return the country's most exclusive neighborhood to the tougher R-1 classification, instead of the present R-2, which apparently would allow duplexes to be built, especially along McKinley Road, despite the subdivision's deed of restrictions.

Heard through the grapevine

THE TANTOCO siblings want to fold the profitable Starbucks coffee chain into the Rustans Group, but Starbucks principal Menchu Tantoco-Lopez is adamantly opposed to the idea.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Inquirer Job Expo 2006 opens today

INQUIRER JOB MARKET, THE INQUIRER'S recruitment section, partners with GMA Network in helping the government address the ever-increasing unemployment in the country by staging the INQUIRER Job Market Employment Expo 2006 today until July 19 at the Glorietta Activity Center.

At least a hundred companies including PLDT, IBM, Fujitsu, SM, Aboitiz, Convergys, eTelecare, Apac, Clientlogic, Navitaire and Metrobank will seek to fill their job vacancies.

To avoid the long queues at the registration, job seekers may download a registration form at www.jobmarketonline.com that they can fill out and present for an express entrance.

On July 18, the "Reporter's Notebook" host will talk about "Experiences of a Broadcast Journalist." Free slots are on a first come-first served basis.

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Lackluster trade seen

From page B1

overseas improves, oil prices may drop quickly," Aclan said.

Conrado Bate, president of online broker Citiseconline.com, said the drop in the market last week was due to the tension in the Middle East causing foreign funds to shift out of risky assets such as the emerging markets to US bonds.

AB Capital Securities said in a weekly report that record oil prices and the US Dow Jones' sharp 290-point drop in the last two trading days knocked down the local market last week.

As a result the benchmark index lost 2.1 percent week on week.

"But trading remained interesting given the rise of power utilities and the rise in gold prices. Investor interest was focused on utility stocks speculated to be in lock for the bidding of upcoming cash-generating (power) projects," AB Capital Securities said.

AB Capital said news that Mirant Corp., the country's biggest independent power producer, would be divesting its stake in Philippine unit Mirant Philippines Corp. fueled interest in Lopez energy units First Gen Corp. and Manila Electric Co.

Spillover buying in Ayala Corp. was also noticeable as it announced plans to venture into the power sector late last year.

Gold prices were up 16 percent in the past month, boosting local stocks with a play on gold.

With the weakness in global markets, the market ignored robust OFW remittances, which grew 29.8 percent year-on-year to $1.14 billion in May. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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LGUs ready to settle back taxes

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS HAVE COMmitted to finally settle their back taxes with the Bureau of Internal Revenue, including unremitted withholding taxes since the 1990s, amid warnings of a cut in their share of the national budget.

The Philippine Association of Local Treasurers and Assessors (Phaltra), headed by Quezon City Treasurer Victor Endriga, said the organization already got the commitment of its members to do an audit of their outstanding tax balances and remit these to the BIR.

The delinquency of some LGUs in remitting income and value-added taxes they withhold from employees and suppliers has long been a problem for the BIR, which has blamed weak tax collection partly on the failure of LGUs to pay their taxes.

The problem has been brought to the attention of the Department of Finance, head agency of the BIR, which then directed LGUs to settle their back taxes.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves has had talks with Endriga and other Phaltra officials on how to force the LGUs to pay the back taxes.

Endriga recommended that the BIR force collection by simply cutting the LGUs' share in the annual national budget.

"This way, we serve justice to both local and national governments," Endriga said.

Under the Local Government Code, 40 percent of the revenues collected by the national government should be given to LGUs to help fund projects and programs of local communities.

To underscore the significance of the unremitted taxes by the LGUs, the DOF said Revenue Region 5 alone owes the BIR some P201.31 million in unremitted withholding taxes.

The most delinquent LGUs in the revenue region include Caloocan City, which has P93.91 million worth of back taxes and penalties; Plaridel, Bulacan, P9.7 million; Valenzuela City, P4.79 million; and Malabon, P1.86 million. *Michelle V. Remo*

NDC to float ₱2B in bonds

Gov't firm given go-ahead to borrow ₱10B-₱20B

By Michelle V. Remo

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO. WILL float P2 billion worth of bonds this week to raise funds for the government's infrastructure projects.

The float is expected to be the first of a series of debt issues as NDC has been given the go-ahead to borrow as much as P20 billion from the domestic capital market to fund major infrastructure projects.

In a memorandum to dealers of government securities, the Bureau of the Treasury said the bonds to be issued by the NDC shall have a five-year tenor.

The debt offering will be managed by Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines.

NDC's debt offering is backed by a government guarantee.

The NDC, whose primary task is to finance infrastructure projects, was tasked this year to tap private funds through the issuance of debt paper. The administration's economic managers had said it was about time the government put due focus on developing the country's infrastructure considering that its fiscal position has already improved, and that the budget deficit was expected to be wiped out by 2008.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier said the government intends to boost its infrastructure spending to 4 percent of gross domestic product over the medium term.

Currently, infrastructure spending stands at only 2 percent, making the Philippines lag far behind its Southeast Asian counterparts.

Neda said Southeast Asian countries spend an average of 5 percent of their GDP on infrastructure.

Poor spending on infrastructure, largely attributed to the national government's budget woes since the onset of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, has been largely blamed for a restrained economic growth.

A third of the government's annual budget is set aside for debt servicing, leaving just a meager amount for basic services and infrastructure.

The failure of Congress to pass the proposed 2006 national budget of P1.053-trillion, however, has put the Arroyo administration's pump-priming program in jeopardy.

The government now works on a reenacted 2005 budget of only P918.619 billion.

Economic managers said the executive branch would likely ask Congress for a supplemental budget to pursue pump-priming programs.

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L.A. 1,086 sqm.
Columbia St. BROOKESIDE HILLS SUBD
Min. Bid Price: P 2,395,300

SPR_CNT180 RSDL LOT
L.A. 676 sqm.
Eagle St. Cor Sparrow St.
DON MARIANO SUBD. San Isidro
Min. Bid Price: P 2,560,000

SPR_CNT181 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 173 sqm. F.A.
Along Golden Mile Ave.
GOLDEN MILE SUBD. Balanti
Min. Bid Price: P 4,700,000

SPR_CNT182 RSDL LOT
Coventry St., BIRMINHGAM
PLACE, BROOKESIDE HILLS

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
186 sqm.	P 495,000
182 sqm.	485,000

SPR_CNT183 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 320 sqm.
(near Sta. Lucia)
Corinthia St. VISTA VERDE
Min. Bid Price: P 2,740,000

CALOOCAN

SPR_CAL080 RSD'L LOTS
L.A. 242 sqm.
Marigold St., BF HOMES Brgy. Deparo
Min. Bid Price: P 617,100

SPR_CAL081 OFFICE UNIT
F.A. 69.90 sqm.
A.Del Mundo Cor. GRACEPARK
Min. Bid Price: P 1,827,030

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L.A. 146 sqm.
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Min. Bid Price: P 1,273,448

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SPR_LSP088 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 350 sqm. F.A.247.56 sqm.
TROPICAL AVE., BF RESORT
Min. Bid Price: P 4,043,450

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L.A. 236 sqm. F.A.175 sqm.
(near SM Sucat)
Rosal St. GACHALIAN VILL.
Min. Bid. Price: P 1,814,492

SPR_LSP185 RSD'L LOTS
L.A. 54,085 sqm. (near SM Southmall)
Near Gen. Del Pilar (Soldiers Hills 2)
MARVEN VILLE SUBD.
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SPR_LSP213 4-STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 136 sqm. F.A.
Zapote - Alabang Rd. Pamplona
Min. Bid Price: P5,013,300

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SPR_MKT093 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 148 sqm.
(near Makati Cinema Square)
VERNIDA I CONDO, Amorsolo St.
Min. Bid Price: P 5,855,958

SPR_MKT094 RSD'L CONDO.
F.A. 39.92 sqm. (near iBank Mkt. Ave)
SUNNETTE TOWER HOTEL,
P. Durban St.
Min. Bid. Price: P 1,298,393

SPR_MKT095 RSD'L CONDO,
F.A. 107 sqm. (near KFC L.P. Leviste)
THE PEAK CONDO, SALCEDO VILL
Min. Bid Price: P 7,518,082

SPR_MKT096 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 45.25 sqm.
BURGUNDY TOWER, Gil Puyat, Buendia
Min. Bid Price: P 5,278,115

SPR_MKT097 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 66.31 sqm.
BURGUNDY TOWER, Gil Puyat, Buendia
Min. Bid Price: P 7,734,490

SPR_MKT098 RSDL CONDO W/PRKG
F.A. 233 sqm. (near KFC L.P. Leviste)
LPL MANOR, Alfaro St. Salcedo Vill.
Min. Bid Price: P 8,779,558

SPR_MKT099 RSD'L CONDO.
F.A. 55.22 sqm. (nr. Pizza Hut Mkt. Ave)
MAKATI PRIME CITADEL CONDO
P. Burgos
Min. Bid Price: P 2,560,625

SPR_MKT100 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 65.10 sqm.
MAKATI CINEMA SQUARE TOWER,
Pasong Tamo
Min. Bid Price: P 2,213,400

SPR_MKT101 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 583 sqm.
P. Burgos cor. CALDERON ST.
Min. Bid Price: P 19,822,000

SPR_MKT102 COMML CONDO
F.A. 30 sqm.
T- TOWER CONDO
P. Burgos cor. CALDERON ST.
Min. Bid Price: P 765,000

SPR_MKT188 STUDIO TYPE CONDO
F.A. 36 sqm.
SOUTH STAR PLAZA S. Super Hiway
Min. Bid Price: P 885,000

SPR_MKT187 RSD'L CONDO
F.A. 66.03 sqm.
PALACE OF MAKATI, P. Burgos St.
Min. Bid Price: P 5,392,000

SPR_MKT186 RSD'L CONDO
F.A. 150 sqm.
LPL MANOR CONDO, Alfaro St.
Min. Bid Price: P 7,910,000

MANILA

SPR_MNL104 2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 142.50 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
(near Augusto Francisco St.)
Mercurio St., SAN ANDRES BUKID
Min. Bid Price: P 2,794,995

MARIKINA

SPR_MRK107 RSD'L/COMM'L LOT
L.A. 248 sqm. (near China Trust)
JP Rizal St. SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price: P 2,232,000

SPR_MRK211 TOWNHOUSE
F.A. 420 sqm.
AGUINALDO St.,
Min. Bid Price P 4,855,015

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

SPR_MON225 AGRI LOT
L.A. 11,988 sqm.
DAO ST.
Min. Bid Price: P4,839,000.00

SPR_MON184 AGRI LOT
L.A. 240 sqm.
Brgy., San Jose, ADIA
Min. Bid Price: P1,806,000

MUNTINLUPA

SPR_MUN109 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 602 sqm. F.A. 447.80 sqm.
(near Alabang Town Center)
Toledo St., ALABANG HILLS SUBD
Min. Bid Price: P 9,681,500

SPR_MUN189 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 602 sqm. F.A. 447.80 sqm.
(near Alabang Town Center)
Toledo St., ALABANG HILLS SUBD
Min. Bid Price: P 8,715,000

SPR_MUN190 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,221 sqm. F.A. 1,092 sqm.
(near Filinvest Business Park)
PLEASANT VILLAGE, Bayanan
Min. Bid Price: P 8,850,000

PARAÑAQUE

SPR_PRQ112 CONDO / TWNHSE W/ PRKG
F.A. 77.65 sqm. (near Lopez Village)
WESTMONT VILL. Dr. Santos Ave., Sucat
Min. Bid Price: P 1,480,500

SPR_PRQ113 TOWNHOUSE w/ PRKG
L.A. 131.75 sqm. F.A. 116.75 sqm.
(near Lopez Village)
Unit Pe Lauan, WESTMONT VILL.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,295,000

SPR_PRQ191 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 290 sqm.
ILANG-ILANG ST., CAMELLA HOMES
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SPR_PRQ192 2 RSDL LOT
L.A. 986 sqm. (each)
(near Coastal Road)
Seascape cor. Bluewhale
JALEVILLE SUBD.
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L.A. 291 sqm.
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San Dionisio, Sucat
Min. Bid Price: P 3,771,450

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SPR_PSY118 4-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 674 sqm. F.A. 245 sqm.
P. ZAMORA ST.
Min. Bid Price: P 11,082,500

ORTIGAS CENTER, PASIG

SPR_PSG193 RSD'L CONDO.
F.A. 108.57 sqm. (near SM Megamall)
ONE MAGNIFICENT MILE CONDO
Min. Bid Price: P 5,330,000

PASIG

SPR_PSG195 TOWNHOUSE
L.A. 87.90 sqm. F.A. 260 sqm.
(near Shaw Blvd.)
VIRGINIA TOWNHOMES,
San Ignacio St.
Min. Bid Price: P2,750,000

QUEZON CITY

SPR_QC118 COMM'L/IND'L LOT
L.A. 1,497 sqm. (near Villa Village)
Quirino Highway, Brgy. Talipapa,
NOVALICHES
Min. Bid Price: P 19,461,000

SPR_QC119 2 RSD'L CONDO.
F.A. 45 sqm (each)
(near Ali Mall/SM/Gateway)
PRINCE GREGORY CONDO, Cubao
Min. Bid Price: P 1,721,250

SPR_QC120 COMML/OFFICE
L.A. 900.05 sqm.
Mindanao Ave. Bago Bantay
Min. Bid Price: P 20,979,075

SPR_QC121 CONDO. BLDG. W/ PRKG
L.A. 3,409.38 sqm. F.A. 2,406 sqm.
(along Tomas Morato St.)
HOSLA CONDOMINIUM-I
Min. Bid Price: P 82,706,719

SPR_QC122 14 STRY. RSDL BLDG
L.A. 532 sqm.
CUBAO (Unfinished Bldg)
Min. Bid Price: P 29,767,918

SPR_QC123 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
(near Aurora Blvd.)
MIAMI ST., Cubao
Min. Bid Price: P 6,337,600

SPR_QC126 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 714 sqm.
(near EDSA, New York Cubao)
MARYLAND ST. Cubao
Min. Bid Price: P 7,395,000

SPR_QC127 2 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 600 sqm.
Catolos St. CUBAO
Min. Bid Price : P 20,040,000

SPR_QC226 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 160 sqm.
Cristina Lane St. DIAMOND SUBD.
Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P1,424,600

SPR_QC227 RSDL LOT
L.A. 400 sqm.
Maamo St. SIKATUNA VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P5,793,010

SPR_QC196 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 178 sqm.
(near FEU Hospital-Fairview)
GREENVIEW EXEC.VILL.Bagbag
Min. Bid Price: P 980,000

SPR_QC197 RSD'L CONDO
F.A. 39 sqm. (near Ateneo Katipunan)
XAVIERVILLE ROYALE CONDO
Min. Bid Price: P 1,555,000

SPR_QC198 2-STRY H&L w/ ATTIC
L.A. 180 sqm. F.A. 328 sqm.
(near Tandang Sora)
NORTH SUSANA EXEC.VILL.,Old Balara
Min. Bid Price: P 4,560,000

SPR_QC199 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 250sqm.
(near Ali Mall/SM/Gateway)
5th Ave., CUBAO
Min. Bid Price: P7,810,000

SPR_QC200 2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 400 sqm. F.A. 490 sqm.
Osmena St., T. S.CRUZ SUBD.
Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P1,540,000

SPR_QC201 2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 217.60 sqm. F.A. 588.60 sqm.
(near Mindanao Ave.)
Cor. Alley 1 PROJECT 6
Min. Bid Price: P 5,400,000

SPR_QC202 RSD'L CONDO.
(near Quezon Ave. & West Ave.)
WEST MANSION HOTEL, Zamboanga St.

FLOOR AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
55.97 sqm.	P2,140,852.50
37.76 sqm.	1,283,500.00

SPR_QC203 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 270 sqm. F.A. 220 sqm.
(near Batasan Hall)
SUNSTONE ST., Northview I, Filinvest II
Min. Bid Price: P 2,945,000

SPR_QC204 2-STRY APARTMENT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 640 sqm.
(near Ali Mall/SM/Gateway)
11th Ave. CUBAO
Min. Bid Price: P 3,965,000

SPR_QC205 RSD'L CONDO.
F.A. 80 sqm.
(near Ali Mall/SM/Gateway)
UNION SQUARE ONE CONDO
Min. Bid Price: P2,050,000

SPR_QC206 1-STRY. HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 450 sqm. F.A. 325 sqm.
(near SFDM)
WAYAN ST., Masambong
Min. Bid Price: P6,900,000

SPR_QC207 2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 828 sqm.
Sampaguita cor Calleya Sts.
MAPAYAPA VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P 5,545,400

SPR_QC208 2-STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 489 sqm. F.A. 221 sqm.
(near Aurora Blvd./Gateway/SM)
WEST POINT ST., Cubao
Min. Bid Price: P 7,115,000.00

TAGUIG

SPR_TAG209 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 240 sqm.
(near Fishers Valley College)
BAY BREEZE SUBD., Wawa
Min. Bid Price: P 615,000.00

TAYTAY, RIZAL

SPR_TAY076 H&L w/ WRHSE
L.A. 454 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
(near Petron Station)
Macopa St., DIVIDEND VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price: P 1,335,000

SPR_TAY224 2 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 328 sqm.
MONTE VERDE ROYALE, Brgy San Juan
Min. Bid Price: P2,206,644

VALENZUELA

SPR_VAL128 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,234 sqm. F.A. 800 sqm.
KOWLOON COMPOUND
Bo. Ugong, Mapulang Lupa,
Min. Bid Price: P 10,074,600

BAGUIO
Text 0918-5328111

SPR_BAG001 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 177.16 sqm.
BAGUIO CLASSIC CONDO
Green Valley Subd.
Min. Bid Price. P 2,710,650

BATANGAS
Text 09175443083

SPR_BAT221 COMML BLDG
L.A. 1,206 sqm. F.A. 144 sqm.
Brgy. 4 Poblacion, SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price: P7,475,600.00

SPR_BAT164 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 171 sqm. (near Basilica Church)
VERGARA ST.
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000

SPR_BAT165 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 128.50 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
(near Basilica Church)
Interior CAIDO ST., Poblacion
Min. Bid Price: P 2,100,000

SPR_BAT166 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 204 sqm. F.A. 140 sqm.
(In front of La Salle Lipa)
Macros Dr. VILLA LOURDES
Min. Bid Price: P 1,520,000

SPR_BAT167 FARM LOT
L.A. 20,000 sqm.(along Brgy. Road/
near Sabang Lipa Town Proper)
Bonifacio St., Brgy. Latag, LIPA
Min. Bid Price: P 42,500,000

SPR_BAT168 FARM LOT
L.A. 49,716 sqm. (along Brgy. Road/
near Sabang Lipa Town Proper)
Bonifacio St., Brgy. Latag, LIPA
Min. Bid Price: P13,350,000

BULACAN
Text 09273333733

SPRW_BUL215 RSDL LOT
L.A. 273.60 sqm.
DEOGRACIAS SUBD. Sto Cristo, Malolos
Min. Bid Price : P 487,008

SPR_BUL216 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 748 sqm. F.A. 63 sqm.
Brgy. Bitucao, Pulong Buhangin,
STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price : P 608,790

SPR_BUL147 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 198 sqm.
BALAGTAS
Min. Bid Price: P850,000

SPR_BUL148 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 6,709 sqm.
Barangay Sabang, BALIUAG
Min Bid Price: P 4,850,000

SPR_BUL149 RSDL LOT
L.A. 229 sqm.
MAUNLAD HOMES SUBD.
Brgy. San Francisco
Min. Bid Price: P 455,000

SPR_BUL150 2 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 6,144 sqm.
Provincial Road, Bo. Bulac, STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price: P 8,250,000

SPR_BUL151 RSDL LOT
L.A. 180 sqm.
Herson St., GREENBREEZE SUBD
Pulong Buhangin, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price. P 230,000

SPR_BUL152 RSDL LOT
L.A. 342 sqm.
Garnet St., CITYLAND BULACAN HGTS
Pulong Buhangin, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 295,000

CAGAYAN
Text 09198203838

SPR_ISA145 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 302 sqm. F.A. 32.05 sqm.
Magallanes St. Poblacion, TUGUEGARAO
Min. Bid Price: P 2,150,000

CAVITE
Text 09189048230

SPR_CVT053 RSDL LOT
L.A. 279 sqm. (near SM Bacoor)
Violeta St. ANDREA VILLAGE,
Brgy. Panapaan
Min. Bid Price : P 834,907

SPR_CVT054 RSDL LOT
L.A. 276 sqm. (near SM Bacoor)
Violeta St. ANDREA VILLAGE,
Brgy. Panapaan
Min. Bid Price : P 831,915

SPR_CVT057 RSDL LOT
L.A. 126 sqm.
MANILA ORCHARD
TOWNHOMES, Salitran
Min. Bid Price : P 3,062,500

SPR_CVT222 HOUSE & LOT
L.A 198 sqm. F.A. 117.87 sqm.
Greenbreeze Subd., Langkaan,
DASMARINAS
Min. Bid Price: P634,330

SPR_CVT223 2 RSDL LOT
L.A.180 sqm. (each)
Melbourn St. GREENBREEZE
VILL., Dasmariñas
Min. Bid Price: P 291,600

SPR_CVT173 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 174 sqm. F.A. 83 sqm.
(near SM-Bacoor)
Diamond St. Perpetual Vil. BACOOR
Min. Bid Price: P 950,000

SPR_CVT174 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 419 sqm. F.A. 92 sqm.
(near SM-Bacoor)
Caimito St. Ext. JUSTINVILLE-I
SUBD., Panapaan, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P1,450,000

SPR_CVT175 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 80 sqm. F.A. 44 sqm.
(near Dela Salle Dasma.)
SUMMERWIND SUBD.
Tel Aviva St.Dasmarinas
Min. Bid Price. P 580,000

SPR_CVT176 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 209 sqm. (near Island Cove)
Along Julio Sarayba,KAWIT
Min. Bid Price: P 522,000

SPR_CVT177 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 500 sqm. (near EPZA)
GRANDIOSA SUBD.
Brgy. Bagtas and Punta,Tanza
Min. Bid Price: P 640,000

ISABELA
Text 09198203838

SPR_ISA211 RSDL/AGRI LOT
L.A. 1,275 sqm.
Brgy. Centro/SAN ANTONIO, ALICIA
Min. Bid Price : P 780,416

SPR_ISA148 AGRI LOT
L.A. 28,724 sqm.
Bantay, JONES
Min. Bid Price: P375,000

LAGUNA
Text 09195801558

SPR_LGN060 RSDL LOT
L.A. 336 sqm.
GLENWOOD PARK, Calamba
Min. Bid Price : P 1,029,000

SPR_LGN178 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 50.70 sqm.
Nielo St.,PLATERO, BIÑAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,110,000

NUEVA ECIJA
Text 09156002733

SPR_NE013 RSDL LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 240 sqm. F.A. 160 sqm.
KAPITAN PEPE SUBD., Cabanatuan
Min. Bid price : P 614,160

SPR_NE016 RSD'L LOTS
L.A. 150 sqm.
Along QUIMSON EXTENSION ST.
Sangitan
Min. Bid Price: P 1,009,214

SPR_NE017 COMML/RSDL BLDG
L.A. 301 sqm. F.A. 165 sqm.
Bernardo Dist. MAHARLIKA RD
Min. Bid Price: P 2,093,550

SPR_NE021 HOUSE & LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 1,246 sqm. F.A. 96 sqm.
Melencio Cor Manilla KAPITAN PEPE
Min. Bid Price: P 3,958,587

SPR_NE025 5 RSDL/ AGRI LOT
L.A. 120,472 sqm.
Bantug, MUÑOZ
Min. Bid Price: P 6,014,400

SPR_NE026 2 AGRI LOT
L.A. 70,368 sqm.
Mapalad Brgy. Rd. Mapalad. STA. ROSA
Min. Bid Price : P 6,975,000

SPRW_NE217 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 178 sqm. F.A. 96 sqm.
Poblacion, SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price : P 83,400

SPRW_NE218 2 STRY APRTMT
L.A. 465 sqm. F.A. 459 sqm.
San Lorenzo, GAPAN
Min. Bid Price : P 5,717,011

SPR_NE153 2-STRY BLDG w/ PNTHSE
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A.
(near Lakewoods Subd.)
MAHARLIKA HIGHWAY
Min. Bid Price: P 9,850,000

SPR_NE154 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 841 sqm. F.A.
CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,225,000

SPR_NE155 RSD'L LOTS
L.A. 150 sqm.
Along QUIMSON EXTENSION ST.
Sangitan (Adjacent to East Central
Elem School)
Min. Bid Price: P 345,000

SPR_NE156 COMM'L/RSD'L BLDG.
L.A. 301 sqm. F.A. 165 sqm.
(near Bosco Auto Supply)
Bernardo Dist. MAHARLIKA RD
Min. Bid Price: P 2,100,000

SPR_NE157 2 STRY. H & L
L.A. 500 sqm. F.A.
Cardenas St.,Poblacion, SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price: P 3,700,000

SPR_NE158 RSD'L LOT
L. A. 423 sqm.
Andal Alino Subd., TALAVERA
Min. Bid Price: P 385,000

PANGASINAN
Text 09287260430

SPR_PGN009 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 3,306sqm.
Brgy. Pinaludpod, URDANETA
Min. Bid Price: P 3,050,000

SPR_PNG212 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 2,057 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
BASISTA
Min. Bid Price: P 776,852.00

SPR_PNG213 RSDL LOT
L.A.1,629 sqm.
BASISTA
Min. Bid Price: P1,118,000.00

SPR_PNG214 RSDL LOT
L.A. 802.50 sqm.
Gen. Aguinaldo St. Poblacion,MALASIQUI
Min. Bid Price: P545,700.00

QUEZON PROVINCE
Text 09209222495

SPR_QP062 2 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 425 sqm. (near DFA Office)
Within Puerto Del Mar Subd.
ILAYANG SABANG
Min. Bid Price: P 2,454,620

SPR_QP065 RSDL LOT
L.A.6,501 sqm.
LORETA ST. Interior Brgy. Cotta
Min. Bid Price : P 1,710,180

SPR_QP066 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,850 sqm.
Diversion Rd. BRGY. IBABANG DUPAY
Min. Bid Price : P 2,516,920

UOB_OP067 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 12,031 sqm. (near Town Proper)
National Hway Masin Sur, CANDELARIA
Min. Bid Price: P 20,452,700

TAGAYTAY
Text 09175443083

SPR_TGY041 RSDL LOT
L.A. 350 sqm.
RODEO HILLS SUBD. Alfonso
Min. Bid Price : P 446,250

SPR_TGY171 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 375 sqm. (in front of Splendido)-
RODEO HILLS SUBD. Alfonso
Min. Bid Price: P 550,000

SPR_TGY050 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 465 sqm. F.A. 220 sqm.
CITIFARMS SUBD. crossing
Mendez West
Min. Bid Price : P 2,937,500

SPR_TGY052 RSDL LOT
L.A. 180 sqm.
PC Enlisted Men's & CITY
EMPLOYEE'S VILLAGE
Min. Bid Price : P 460,209

SPR_TGY169 RAWLAND
L.A. 15,000 sqm. (overlooking
Tagaytay Lake & Taal Volcano)
Brgy. Biniraya, TAGAYTAY RIDGE
Min. Bid Price: P18,425,750

SPR_TGY170 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. (near Tagaytay
Casino Filipino & Splendido)
Johnson St. ROYALE TAGAYTAY EAST
Min. Bid Price: P 1,650,000

SPR_TGY172 RSDL LOT
L.A. 8,059 sqm.
Ligaya Drive, Brgy. SUNGAY
Min Bid Price: P16,800,000

TARLAC
Text 0927-7981340

SPR_TAR033 3 RSDL LOT
L.A. 6,230 sqm.
Sitio BANGA-BANGA
Min. Bid Price : P 1,069,621

SPR_TAR219 RSDL LOT
L.A. 228 sqm.
HAPPY HILLS SUBD., Carangalan
Min. Bid Price: P192,000

SPR_TAR 220 4 RSDL LOTS
L.A. 150 sqm. (each)
FELOMENA SUBD. Bo. San Rafael
Min. Bid Price: P278,000 each

SPR_TAR159 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. (Camp Macabulos)
SAN VICENTE HILLS, San Roque
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000

SPR_TAR160 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 329 sqm. F.A.
Macabulos Drive, BO. SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price: P 455,000

SPR_TAR161 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 247 sqm. F.A. 119 sqm.
San Sebastian Vill BO. SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price: P 750,000

SPR_TAR162 RSD'L LOT
L.A. 1,642 sqm.
Ninoy Aquino H-way, SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price: P 2,050,000

SPR_TAR163 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 867 sqm. F.A.
Paraiso St. Sitio Maligaya
SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price: P 505,000

CEBU
Text 09266256957

SPR_CBU228 RSDL/COMML LOT
L.A. 1,700 sqm.
Bo. Tabunoc, TALISAY
Min. Bid Price: P22,917,700

SPR_CBU229 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 680 sqm. F.A. 600 sqm.
Cavans Comp., BO. GUADALUPE
Min. Bid Price: P3,567,915

SPR_CBU230 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 600 sqm.
Bo. Modesta, GUADALUPE
Min. Bid Price: P3,675,455

GENERAL SANTOS
Text 09287666746

SPR_GSC135 RSDL/COMML LOT
L.A. 11,424 sqm. (near Muslim
Mosque/ New Society Nat'l School)
cor. Diversion Road BO. of APOPONG
Min. Bid Price: P 970,700

SPR_GSC 13- HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 204 sqm. F.A. 70 sqm.
VERGARA SUBD., City Heights
Min. Bid Price: P332,350

ZAMBOANGA
Text 09155511083

SPR_ZAM210 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 645 sqm. F.A. 289 sqm
STA. MARIA
Min. Bid Price: P2,145,000

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SEC mulls over giving Pacific license to sell

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission is considering granting beleaguered pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. a license to sell securities.

"We are seriously considering granting them a license, but we have to make sure they are compliant with all the requirements before we can grant a license," SEC Commission Secretary Gerard Lukban said.

Lukban added, however, that the company has yet to complete its actuarial valuation report, which is one of the indicators of its ability to meet obligations.

A pre-need firm is granted a dealer's license based on a number of factors. These include adequacy of capital, ability to meet maturing and future obligations, and quality of assets.

PPI last month released P140 million in tuition fee payments for school year 2006-2007 to holders of traditional education plans in line with the Makati Regional Trial Court's (RTC) recent approval of the firm's rehabilitation scheme.

PPI president Alfredo J. Non said a total of 12,000 plan holders will be receiving their checks via courier.

He added that all plan holders applying for benefits for school years 2006 to 2010 would be able to get back their original investments plus a return on investment of anywhere from 100 percent to more than 2,000 percent.

Last April, the Makati RTC approved the rehabilitation of PPI together with a formula that would assure tuition support from 2006 to 2010.

During school year 2005-2006, PPI released to 16,000 plan holders a total of P591 million in tuition fee payments.

PPI has 34,000 holders of traditional plans, which assure holders of full tuition fee payments regardless of amount.

New incentives rules on BOI projects up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

REGISTRATION WITH THE Board of Investments no longer ensures tax perks as Malacañang recently adopted new rules in evaluating projects seeking incentives.

According to BOI officials, the departments of trade and of finance have agreed that BOI registration will not automatically lead to income tax holidays.

The agencies had been at odds on whether the granting of investment perks should be continued.

The Department of Trade and Industry—BOI's parent organization—said perks were essential for investments to flow, while the DOF said perks redounded to billions of pesos in foregone revenues.

Data from the DOF showed that in 2003, the government lost some P300 billion in foregone revenues due to various tax exemptions provided through fiscal perks.

On the other hand, BOI data showed that between 1995 and 2001, the government was able to attract an average of P10 in investments and P21 in export earnings for every peso of incentives.

Before the rules were changed, projects that were approved for listing as a pioneer project were qualified for a six-year tax holiday while non-pioneer ventures were qualified for a four-year ITH.

Also, the evaluation of projects would now go through consultations with the DOF, which would have a say on whether an ITH is recommended for a project.

However, the BOI said it still had the authority to overrule the DOF's recommendations.

Morever, the DOF would not be provided with the names of proponents and would only be evaluating projects on the basis of the nature of the venture and matters involving cost, finances and location.

The new rules were issued as part of the government's thrust toward fiscal consolidation, officials said.

The DOF has never been represented in the BOI although the DOF, along with the National Economic Development Authority, used to be part of the team that formulates the Investment Priorities Plan every year.

Panganiban sees quick passage of Biofuels bill

BACOLOD CITY—AGRICULTURE Secretary Domingo Panganiban said last week he was confident the Senate would soon pass the Biofuels Bill with Sen. Edgardo Angara now chairing the committee on energy.

Angara has taken over the committee chairmanship from Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who has gone on leave.

Panganiban said Angara fully supports the bill and was finalizing the contents of the Senate's version of the Bioethanol Bill for approval by the Upper House.

The passage of the Biofuels Act will spur production of ethanol and open vast tracks of land to sugarcane production, Panganiban said.

The Biofuels Act will also hasten the development of upland areas and the countryside with the planting of jatropha, coconut trees and sugarcane for biofuels, he said.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration estimates that 230,000 hectares more will be planted to sugarcane for ethanol production on top of the 390,000 hectares already planted to sugar, he said.

For coconut, Panganiban said half a million hectares would be needed in the next four years for 5 percent of the country's biofuel needs, and about 200,000 ha for jatropha.

In fact, he said, Flying V was already selling 100-percent coco diesel. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Finance taps ...

From page B1

tance from other government agencies or organizations that could help in cleansing the bureaucracy, he added.

The lifestyle checks conducted by RIPS are focused mainly on officials and employees of the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs suspected of doing corrupt activities. Lifestyle checks are basically done by comparing income of a suspect with his or her assets.

Mendoza said that with the help of the NBI, RIPS was aiming to charge before the Office of the Ombudsman at least 50 people suspected of corruption within a year.

Efforts to intensify the government crackdown on corruption followed the recent approval of a $20-million grant from the US government to address problems of corruption in the Philippine government.

The grant, which will be administered by Millennium Challenge Corp. (MCC) and disbursed in September, will be used to enhance the operations of the RIPS and the Office of the Ombudsman. It will also boost the capability of the government's other anti-corruption programs like the Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) and the Run After the Smugglers (RATS).

While RIPS covers corrupt government workers, RATE and RATS are intended to crack down on unscrupulous members of the private sector, particularly tax evaders and the smugglers.

Malacañang has committed to release P1 billion in counterpart funding for the government's anti-corruption programs to complement the US grant.

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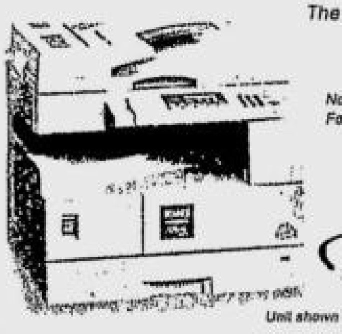

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Cheaper rates contribute to growth of RP Internet cafés

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

THE INTERNET CAFÉ BUSINESS IN THE Philippines continues its growth, spurred by decreasing prices of broadband Internet and computer parts, as well as increasing demand for online and network gaming services.

A new report by the Philippine office of the International Data Corporation (IDC) also showed that Internet cafés are also finding niche markets catering to gaming, Internet use and sales centers for other value-added services such as telecommunications and printing.

The IDC report said most Internet cafés in the Philippines are still micro-sized businesses or those that only have a few available computers with single ownership and only one branch.

Most of the value-added services of these cafés are document printing, scanning, fax and copying.

Likewise, the report said that these pay-as-you go Internet cafés are still preferred by most users over owning home PCs especially as the cost of owning computers is still largely restrictive to most Filipinos.

IDC Philippines Research Manager Manuel Ravago said in a statement the next 12 months will see more Internet cafés concentrating heavily on maintaining or replacing present hardware setups. These Internet cafés will also continue to focus on online gaming nature and basic Internet.

The IDC also reported that 49 percent of all Internet cafés surveyed were not changing their IT expenditures. Another 39 percent said there would be an increase in maintenance or replacement cost while 10 percent said there would be no change.

Ravago also added that Internet cafés in the rural areas should be taken into perspective to be able to secure key business prospects.

"The decelerating broadband costs, growing uptake of online gaming, and declining hardware prices have all served as catalysts for growth in information and communication technology spending from the Internet café industry. In order to capture that potential business opportunity from the sector, the nature and preferences of the Internet cafés must be considered at all times when addressing this particular market," Ravago said.

IDC also forecasts the arrival of new value added services from entrepreneurs, the access providers and the hardware providers as the Internet café business becomes a feasible one to address requirements of new markets.

Likewise, stiffer competition from other Internet cafés will also prompt owners to improve their services.

Photo developing shop adjusts to digital times

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

DIGITAL CAMERAS MAY HAVE RENDERED film-based cameras in the Philippines obsolete, but now it is also affecting photo developing shops which have seen nearly 80 percent of their business shifting from traditional film developing to printing of photos from digital cameras and mobile phones.

Photoline, one of the biggest chains of photo developing shops in the country, has seen a decline of their film developing business as it was overtaken by the digital camera printing business.

Eighty percent of their print jobs are from digital cameras while the remaining requests are for film printing. Three years ago, the ratio of their print business to digital was the opposite.

"There really has been a shift to digital photography, especially in urban areas where people have access to both the cameras and the printing shops. Some people would even have photos taken from their camera-ready phones printed in developing shops," according to Photoline Chief Operating Officer Kristoferson Ting.

A sharp decline in traditional film printing started two years ago when digital camera prices steadily dropped.. Camera buyers at that time were also looking at digitally saving their photos instead of printing them.

Ting said their film business suffered because of the decline in film purchases. Digital camera owners opted to buy large-capacity memory cards instead and have a select number of photos printed while the rest were saved in digital format, either in CDs or computer hard disks.

He said that in previous years, their shops were developing between 50 and 70 rolls of film per day but the advent of digital cameras pushed this back to just 20 per day.

Likewise, there has been a steady increase in home printing especially with the onset of cheaper home printers from the likes of HP and Epson with direct-to-print capabilities.

But despite the decline in their traditional business, Ting said Photoline has maintained a steady growth in the last three years particularly due to the increase in printing requirements from digital camera owners.

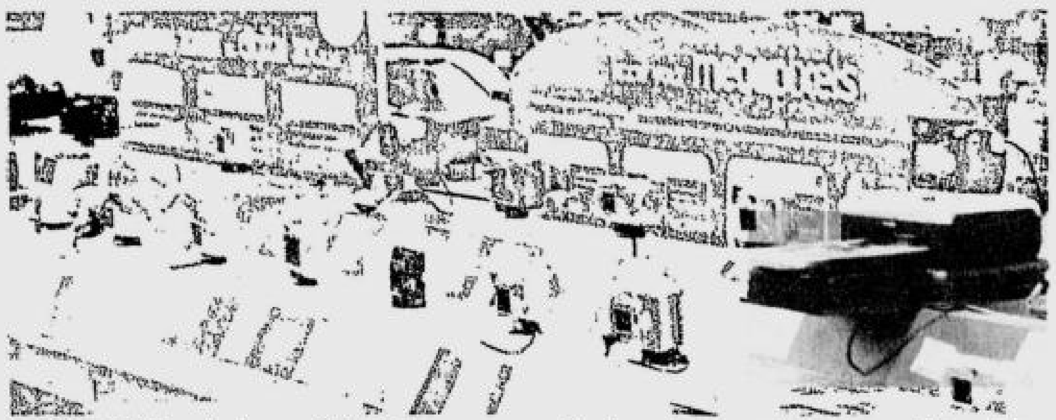
"Often, digital camera owners print more than what they would from film. The cost of printing digital photos is also slightly higher; P7 for a 4R-size photo against P4.50 for film," Ting said.

He added that most of their shops are located within malls where human traffic is higher.

"I've noticed that some of the developing shops outside malls are less frequently visited so we maintain our presence in malls only to ensure maximum exposure to camera owners," he said.

Ting also said that they have been upgrading their existing photo developing minilabs to accommodate digital photo printing. The old machines, which cost around P3.5 million, are attached with "carrier" machines that read digital photos and convert these for a minilab to print.

"We need to ensure that the photo developing business is still viable. The forecast is for the next five to 10 years until Filipinos would do home printing. That's still a long time for us to re-do our business model," Ting said.



NOWADAYS most shops sell digital cameras, not film-based ones, at their stores. Not only is the change being felt by the traditional film camera business; it is hitting the film developing business as well.

Pinoy Stanford fellow dreams of high-tech Davao

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

FORMER YEHEY.COM CO-founder and Funchain.com creator Jason Banico is dreaming of a high-tech Davao City.

After spending nine months in Silicon Valley as a Reuters Digital Vision Program fellow, Banico is back in the Philippines helping his local government and private sector groups transform the city into a "Silicon Valley."

Banico said he went to Stanford to study how incubators could help build a Silicon Valley in developing countries like the Philippines.

To do this, however, he needs to work with different stakeholders in the city. He is currently in discussions with the chamber of commerce in Davao City, ICT groups and the local government.

He has also created a blog called "Silicon Gulf" to share some of his thoughts on making Davao City a tech hub.

"The larger objective is to move forward the state of ICT in Davao City in two to three years in areas of job creation and innovation. The personal objective is to assist the government, the chamber, and one pilot school with activities that will help improve academe-industry collaboration, IT promotion and research and development activities," he added, in an online chat with INQ7.net.

He's now working with an ICT Council in Davao. He also plans to collaborate with Ateneo de Davao University on possible academe-industry collaboration.

From his bio as a fellow in Stanford University, Banico has proposed to "build a pipeline from open source software conceptualization by students within the university's information technology and entrepreneurship programs, to commercialization by entrepreneurs within the incubator."

He hopes to reduce brain drain of information technology skilled workers by improving the ICT capacity of the Philippines.

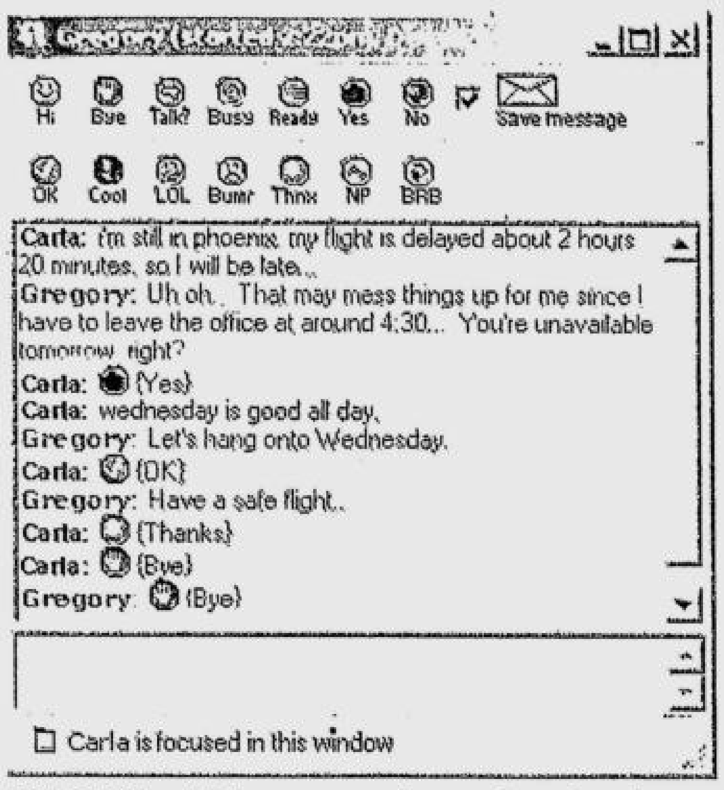
Now, he hopes to apply this new-found knowledge in Davao City.

"I have my heart set to improving my hometown. Davao has so much potential, and our graduates are doing well in Cebu, Manila and overseas. With the world flattening, it doesn't matter so much now whether a company is located in Manila or elsewhere," he said.

Banico admitted getting everyone to cooperate in this ambitious project a challenge.

"Since I have been in Manila for most of my career, I still have to feel my way through to the best way of getting things done in Davao," he added.

Banico is currently the chief technology officer of Hubport Interactive, a Philippine-based web development company.



Carla: i'm still in phoenix. my flight is delayed about 2 hours 20 minutes, so I will be late...
Gregory: Uh oh.. That may mess things up for me since I have to leave the office at around 4:30... You're unavailable tomorrow, right?
Carla: {Yes}
Carla: wednesday is good all day.
Gregory: Let's hang onto Wednesday.
Carla: {OK}
Gregory: Have a safe flight..
Carla: {Thanks}
Carla: {Bye}
Gregory: {Bye}

☐ Carla is focused in this window

ALTHOUGH mobile instant messaging promises a slew of new features on your cell phone, mobile developers say SMS will remain king in the Philippines for a few more years.

Mobile IM will not yet replace SMS, say developers

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

A DOMINANT PLAYER AND A startup engaged in developing mobile services in the Philippines agreed that mobile instant messaging (IM) will not yet replace short messaging service (SMS). They said it would take at least two years before this new innovation in mobile messaging could take off in the country.

Chito Bustamante, chief operating officer of Chikka Asia Inc., the country's biggest provider of mobile instant messaging service, said SMS will continue to dominate the mobile messaging market in the country.

"We're ready for it. But the Philippines is not yet ready," Bustamante said. "People will need to become comfortable with any new innovation to start using it."

It took SMS three to five years to become popular in the Philippines, added Roger Delgado, vice president for technical operations of D3 Systems Inc.

D3 Systems developed YehBa*, a mobile phone client for instant messaging which can be downloaded from the Internet.

Wilfredo dela Cruz, president of D3 Systems, said mobile IM is gaining more attention worldwide. Some operators, he added, are pushing this service as means to increase traffic on their networks.

More traffic means more revenues, Dela Cruz added.

The D3 Systems executive said SMS is like today's e-mail. It allows people to communicate electronically but not in real-time. Mobile instant messaging brings more interactivity.

"Mobile IM is like a dialogue," he said. "But mobile IM is more than a dialogue. It also comes with other features that will indicate the location or availability of each person talking."

Dela Cruz believes mobile IM could even replace voice calls using a mobile handset. Bustamante, however, said mobile IM will require new handsets equipped with a special software client.

"If it's embedded on a mobile phone that is sold, and if it's easy to use, then I think people will start using it. But right now, Filipinos are still using camera phones, for instance, to take and not share pictures," the Chikka executive said.

Chikka, however, has partnered with US-based FastMobile to provide mobile IM to its own subscribers.

D3 Systems, on the other hand, revealed it is currently looking for more partners outside the Philippines to resell its mobile phone client. So far, YehBa* has been downloaded in countries like India, US, Bangladesh and Brunei a month after the software was made available on the Internet, according to Delgado. YehBa* was launched in December 2005.

Both local developers said more market awareness coupled with a push from local mobile phone operators would boost mobile IM usage in the Philippines.

Dela Cruz said local operators are still reluctant to embrace mobile IM.

"Why kill the goose that lays the golden egg?" he said, referring to the "typical" response he receives from local operators who still want to squeeze more revenues out of SMS-based services.

The local operators will dictate the fate of mobile IM in the Philippines, added Dela Cruz. "This is part of the birthing pains we have to undergo."

Design software could boost construction industry productivity

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—Despite being among the most established vertical industries worldwide, the construction business remains slow in adopting new methods to improve productivity, causing delays in finishing buildings and overhead costs.

Many construction companies have also suffered both time and financial losses due to lack of collaboration between architects, builders, utilities companies and materials suppliers as they find design flaws that become evident only during construction.

The problem is also aggravated by the growing need to construct more buildings as the world population grows, which is predicted to reach 9 billion by 2050, up from today's 6 billion people.

Autodesk Vice President of Industry Strategy and Relations Philip Bernstein said builders are hard-pressed to improve the quality of their work and speed up the construction of new buildings particularly because most companies in this industry are still using the traditional pen-and-paper method of creating designs, as well as long processes of submitting and reviewing construction documentation to their partners and suppliers.

Because of time constraints, many builders are forced to start construction and find out the flaws as they go along. Bernstein said delays cause an average of 30 percent loss in the total construction investment.

"This is highly inefficient and very risky because finding design flaws during construction means stopping the progress and people have to go back and forth with their partners to find out how to resolve these problems," he said.

In a few cases, some architectural companies have been integrating software into their businesses, using technology to digitally design buildings that can be viewed and analyzed prior to construction.

Bernstein noted that the Freedom Tower, conceptualized as a memoriam on the former grounds of the collapsed World Trade Center Towers in New York City, was constructed and analyzed completely in digital format.

It took only less than a year to digitally design the Freedom Tower, complete with all of the necessary office space allocations, commercial establishments, electrical, air-conditioning and plumbing services.

Architects from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), designers of the Freedom Tower, used 3D modeling and rendering software to create the new building. It also featured a simulated walkthrough of the first few floors of the building, as well as the roads and park surrounding it.

"SOM was able to construct this building, as well as other new buildings, using digital software. They were actually the first in the world to create and use the first architectural software, which was the basis for today's AutoCAD," Bernstein said.

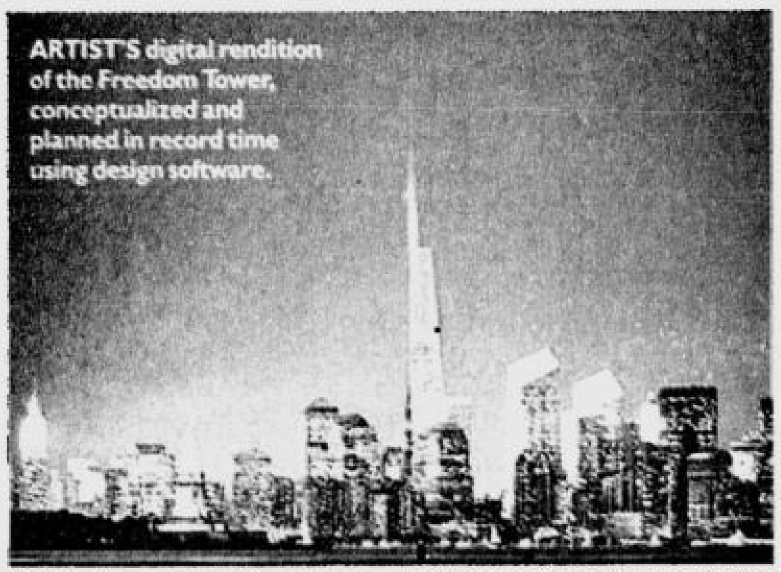
SOM Director Darren Rizza said the construction of the new building would have taken more than a year to finish and it would most likely be just the outer design, not including the interior design.

"But we didn't count the man hours that would have been saved to design the building. What we were trying to resolve was the overall process of collaborating with our business partners. We wanted our partners to be directly part of the design stage and ensure that all possible problems that could be encountered during construction was resolved before laying down the first block," Rizza said.

Rizza added that the quality of work also improved when they started design software to construct new buildings.

"Some of our architects have even used digital software to completely create some of the parts of the building," he said.

Rizza added that Building Information Modeling (BIM) was a major step toward improving productivity. BIM requires that every part of designing a building has to be done and analyzed for technical details prior to the construction process. Its major component is using 3D models that integrate designs for structural capacity and utilities network implementation.



ARTIST'S digital rendition of the Freedom Tower, conceptualized and planned in record time using design software.

"In the Freedom Tower design, BIM made us, our supplies and partners collaborate effectively and avoid wasting time on printing and submitting designs to those involved in its construction," Rizza said.

Rizza said the BIM's effect is evident in the design of the 1776-foot tall Freedom Tower, which started construction April this year and is projected to be finished by 2011.

He added that they would also be using the same concept in all of their upcoming designs, including the Burj Dubai building in United Arab Emirates, touted to be the world's tallest building after its construction.

Rizza said that while BIM is new in the construction business, it will be a major buzzword among architects and construction engineers.

"Eventually, engineers will move their designs to software to make it easier for them," he said.

US to open up Guam, Hawaii for RP mangos

By Christine A. Gaylican

PHILIPPINE EXPORTERS WILL HAVE A BETter chance of cornering the $200-million fresh mango market in the United States when American authorities begin to allow the shipment of products to Guam and Hawaii in August.

Mangos from all over the country, except for those grown in Palawan, will be allowed entry to the US territories—something the exporters consider to be a step forward for Philippine trade.

According to US Department of Agriculture Director for Agriculture Trade Office Dennis Voboril, this development would give local exporters a boost.

The USDA used to allow only mangos from Guimaras to be shipped to its territories.

Voboril said in an interview on Friday that acceptance of the products to the US mainland will depend on the "experimental shipments" that will commence with the delivery of Luzon mangos.

He also said that the USDA has earmarked $1 million for pest risk analysis on Philippine mangos.

"The results of the pest risk analysis will be the basis for which US quarantine authorities will approve or deny the Philippines' request to allow mango producers outside of Guimaras Island to export the tropical fruit to the US," Voboril said.

In 2002, the USDA for the first time allowed the Philippines to export about 220 metric tons (MT) of fresh mangos to the US.

Only mangos grown on Guimaras island were allowed into the mainland.

The Philippines hopes to break the hold Mexico has on the $200-million US market.

On a rainy day, RP may draw on $4B

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A native merchant of Lagawe town, Ifugao, tends to his potent potables known as bayah, a form of wine made from sugar cane, which goes for P25 a bottle. Drinkers of the wine swear to the potency of the native brew.

EV ESPIRITU / PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

New IMF facility to aid emerging economies in times of crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

ASSUMING A GREATER ROLE IN helping emerging economies hurdle potential external shocks, the International Monetary Fund will soon come out with a new emergency facility that may give the Philippines about $4 billion in fresh buffer fund—if and when a crisis strikes.

In an interview over the weekend, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo welcomed the IMF's proposed funding scheme for emerging markets, but said that the country has no need for it at this time.

"The IMF is correct in trying to put up a quick disbursing front-loaded type of assistance," Guinigundo said.

According to visiting IMF deputy managing director Takatoshi Kato, "today's benign situation in global financial markets should not lull us into thinking that the risk of financial crises is past."

During a seminar at the Asian Institute of Management last week, Kato said that the IMF is looking at a new facility that will assist emerging economies in responding to future external crises by giving them easier access to IMF financing, complementing bilateral and multilateral currency swap deals under the Chiang Mai initiative among Asian countries.

Asked whether the IMF is expecting a crisis in the near future—as indicated by its effort to draw up plans for a new contingent financing scheme—Kato said: "We cannot make a prediction into the future ... What we can do is to prepare for that adverse change of sentiment."

According to an IMF briefing paper, the new instrument is supposed to be made available to member countries with strong macroeconomic policies, sustainable debt and transparent reporting, but are still facing balance sheet weaknesses.

The new instrument, to be discussed in the next IMF-World Bank annual meeting in Singapore this September, proposes access of up to 300 percent of a country's quota, automatically available in a single, up-front drawdown, and could still be increased upon subsequent review.

Each member-country of the IMF is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative size in the world economy. The quota determines its maximum financial commitment to the IMF and its voting power, and has a bearing on its access to IMF financing.

The Philippines' quota with the IMF currently stood at 879.9 million special drawing rights (SDR), equivalent to about $1.3 billion (1 SDR=$1.476), according to the IMF website. This quota implies that the country may avail of $3.9 billion or more if the IMF deems that the country deserves such assistance.

The country's outstanding debt with the IMF has now gone down to only $308.7 million, or 23.7 percent of its quota.

Monetary Board makes it easy for auditors to check on banks

THE POLICY-MAKING MONETARY BOARD has fine-tuned the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' crucial regulation on financial reporting that will give external auditors more leeway to complete their audit work on Philippine banks.

The MB last Thursday approved an amendment to the manual of banking regulations to allow banks to submit their financial audit report within 120 days after each calendar year, BSP managing director for supervision and examination Dolores Yuviengco told reporters on Friday.

The amendment will allow external auditors to be more flexible, giving them the option to start their audit work early on.

The old regulation stated that the audit should commence within 30 days from the end of each calendar year and the report must be submitted by the bank to the BSP 90 days after the audit started.

"For larger banks, the auditor starts work even before the year ends so, under the old regulation, it would mean that the financial audit report would have to be submitted even before the end of the year being audited," Yuviengco said.

"For example, the auditor started on Sept. 1 ... if he has 90 days to submit a report, it means the report must be in by end of November" Yuviengco said. "How can you do that when your calendar year ends Dec. 31?"

She said the new regulation would thus relieve undue pressure on external auditors, and give them the chance to choose to start work early or even before the end of the calendar year.

Yuviengco said the MB also approved procedures on financial reporting by local branches of foreign banks.

"The old regulations stated that the financial audit report should be approved or noted by [the bank's] board of directors before it was submitted to the BSP," Yuviengco said.

But in the case of local branches of foreign banks, the members of the bank board are not here, Yuviengco added.

She said that the MB cleared things up by allowing the financial audit report of a foreign bank's local branch to be noted by the country manager. *Doris C. Dumlao*

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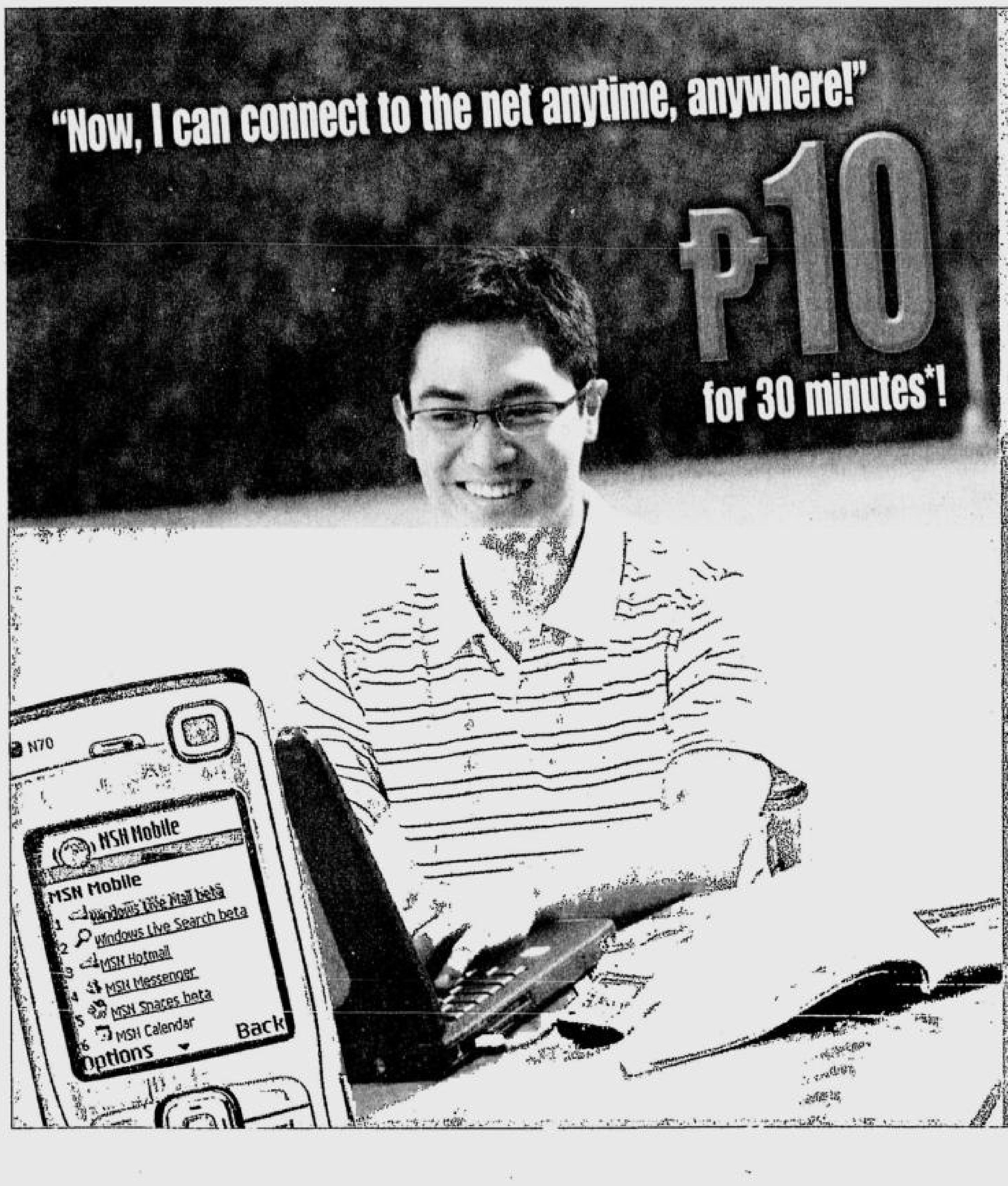

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DAHIL SMART TAYO

PSALM may not meet privatization targets

10 plants scheduled for bidding in '06 but not a single unit has been sold so far

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) is unlikely to meet its privatization targets this year through 2008.

The agency has targeted to sell through bidding 10 power plants this year. But to this day, PSALM has not sold even a single plant.

According to the latest status report on the implementation of RA 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, PSALM had planned to privatize five operating plants in the first half and three others plus two decommissioned plants in the second semester.

Among those that were lined up for bidding in the first half were the 600-megawatt (MW) Calaca coal-fired power plant, the 112-MW Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower facilities package, and the 700-MW Tiwi-Makban geothermal facilities package.

PSALM was able to bid out the Calaca plant last April but the bidding was declared a failure when bidders First Generation Luzon Power Corp. and DMCI Holdings Inc. failed to meet the $288-million reserve price for the plant. This was the second auction held for Calaca.

The privatization body had also issued bid invitations for the Pantabangan-Masiway and Tiwi-Makban plant packages, but it has yet to set firm bidding dates.

For the second semester, PSALM plans to sell the 200-MW Manila thermal and the 225-MW Bataan thermal plants, both decommissioned, as well as the 360-MW Magat hydropower facility, 620-MW Limay combined-cycle plant and 114-MW Iligan I and II diesel-fired generation facility.

Bid invitations for the Magat facility had been released, but the bidding date has yet to be finalized.

PSALM had also tried to auction off some decommissioned assets last year, but these were likewise declared failed bidding. This prompted the privatization body to get a third-party auctioneer for these plants.

The Napocor privatization process recently hit a snag when YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., the winning bidder for the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales, failed to deliver the $227-million down payment for the plant on the June 30 deadline.

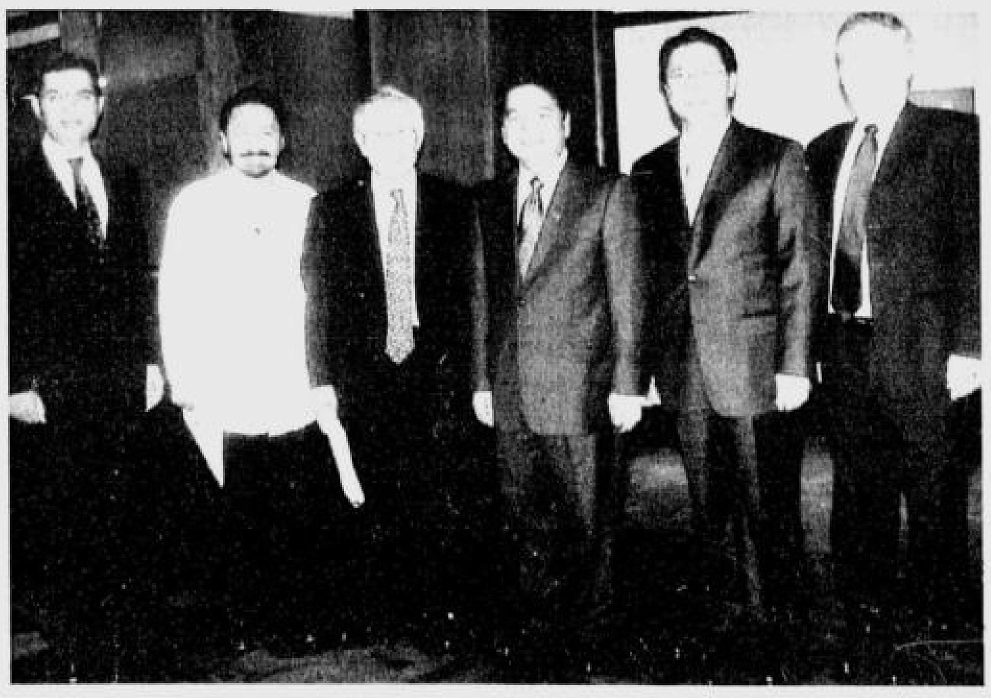
The winning bidder was given up to Aug. 6, the end of the 30-day grace period before contract termination, to make the payment to keep the deal alive.

In March, Malaysian conglomerate Ranhill Berhad became YNN's new financier, eventually offering to buy out its YNN partners for $8 million.

The main condition for the consummation of the transaction, however, was a power supply deal with the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co., the country's biggest power distributor.

But YNN negotiators failed to get Meralco to enter into a supply agreement with it, even after weeks of negotiations.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, also a member of the PSALM board, advised the privatization body to hammer out supply contracts with power distributors before auctioning off any more plants.



CHANGING ROLE OF IMF IN ASIA
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. (4th from L) led the panel-reactors during the International Monetary Fund forum on the changing role of the IMF in Asia. IMF deputy managing director Takatoshi Kato (3rd from L), in his remarks, cited the Philippines for the significant progress made in the area of economic reforms. With the BSP chief and Mr. Kato are (from L) IMF resident representative Preza Baqir , National Treasurer Omar Cruz, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila and IMF senior adviser Sean Nolan.

BOI OKs ₱650-M feed production venture of SMC

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE P650-MILLION ANIMAL feeds mill project of San Miguel Corp.'s poultry business unit was approved for registration by the Board of Investments.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said San Miguel Foods Inc. would be building the mill to meet its own animal feeds requirement and boost total supply in the local market.

BOI data showed that SMFI's factory would start operation with a production capacity of 2.1 million 50-kilogram bags of feeds per year.

The mill's production capacity would be upgraded gradually to 6.22 million bags of feeds by the fourth year of operations.

As early as last year, SMFI has secured the necessary permits from relevant government agencies. It also had developed the site and started works on the buildings and roadways.

About half of the project cost represented expenses on capital equipment, which had been delivered, tested and being prepared for commissioning.

The feed mill is scheduled to start commercial operations at full capacity in January 2007.

Hernandez, who is also the BOI's managing head, said nine other projects worth a total of P250 million were approved for registration in the past two weeks.

These included Biotech Farms Inc.'s P105-million project involving hog raising and processing to meet the supply needs of a sister firm; LSSP Development Corp.'s P60.1-million venture in making 169 low-cost housing units in Imus, Cavite; and Firm Builders Realty Corp.'s P40.7-million mass housing project in Iloilo.

The others were Stargate Enterprise Corp.'s P12.1-million fruits and vegetable processing plant in Davao; Seaoil Philippines Inc.'s P10.8-million expansion plan for its petroleum depot in Mandaluyong City; Montague Resources Philippines Corp.'s P10-million plan to explore for copper and gold in Pangasinan; Hyper Applications on Mobile Inc.'s P7.6-million software development project, and two expansion projects for garment production—HN Apparel Manufacturing Corp.'s P2.1-million project and Royal Touch International Corp.'s P1.2-million venture .

One Voice vs Sigaw

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

AT LAST, A GROUP I CAN SIDE WITH IN THE fight over Charter change has surfaced. As soon as I read the full-page ad of One Voice, I downloaded its position paper from its website. After reading it, I phoned Winnie Monsod, who was overjoyed to know that I wanted to sign up.

One Voice wants Sigaw ng Bayan to stop the so-called people's initiative. This drew a sharp rebuttal immediately from Sigaw. Again, I wonder where spokesperson Raul Lambino gets the money to spend on Sigaw ads. Certainly, it could not have been raised from the 8 million people who he claims have signed the initiative.

As a mere insurance broker, I cannot discuss the constitutional questions on the initiative. I leave such esoteric debates to Father Quin. I prefer to stick to the practical issues.

I have voted in every election since 1946. My itinerant life has brought me to precincts in Naga, Manila, Cebu, Davao. For the past 30 years, I have cast my ballot in Makati. In an election nowadays, I have to present my voter's ID to the public school teachers manning my precinct. My ID is checked against the voter's registry. I am given a ballot to fill up. When I turn in my ballot, I sign my name on the registry. I also stamp my right thumb mark on the registry and on the stub of the ballot. Finally, I have to suffer the atrocity of having my fingernail splashed with indelible ink.

When the precinct closes, the counting begins. The stubs and the ballots are accounted for. The votes are tallied manually and recorded, for all to see, in a large scroll. The teachers, the party representatives and the Namfrel sign seven copies of the results.

The precincts send the results to city hall or *municipio* for canvassing. Then each town or city sends the canvass results to the provincial capitol for the provincial canvass, results of which are sent to Manila for the national canvass. Only then are the winners proclaimed.

The election code prescribes this complicated procedure to elect our national leaders. And the entire process is under the watchful eyes of the Comelec.

Sigaw claims that a proposal as earth-shaking as changing our form of government from a bicameral presidential to a unicameral parliamentary system needs only to be approved by a gathering of signatures from all over the islands on a form designed by no government agency. No voters' ID is required of the signatories. No government agency, certainly not the Comelec, is needed to supervise the exercise.

This is the so-called people's initiative. Now, the nation waits for Sigaw to present the signatures to Comelec for authentication.

Let us lay aside for a while the Supreme Court's decision permanently enjoining the Comelec from even entertaining Sigaw's initiative. Let us even assume that there are no legal obstacles to the authentication process.

Just exactly how will Comelec authenticate 8 million signatures? How will the Comelec get the 8 million real specimen signatures against which the 8 million Sigaw signatures will be verified? How many handwriting experts are there in Comelec? Even if the handwriting experts of the Armed Forces and the National Police and the NBI are assigned to help Comelec, the authentication process will take forever to finish.

Finally, Sigaw was supposed to have gathered signatures from every *barangay*, without exception. Well, no signatures were gathered in my *barangay*. If I have to submit a sworn affidavit to the Comelec to this effect, I will.

My guess is Sigaw does not have the numbers. Otherwise, what is holding them from presenting the signatures to the Comelec?

Sigaw might as well fold up. One Voice will prevail. Then, we will be on the road to real reform.

Phinma unit readies stock rights issue

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPER PHINMA Property Holdings Corp., a unit of Philippine Investment-Management (Phinma) Inc., is raising P226 million in fresh capital through a stock rights issue in the fourth quarter this year.

Phinma chair Oscar Hilado said Phinma and its flagship company Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc. had secured the approval of their respective boards for their participation in the issue.

By exercising their rights to participate in the stock rights offer, Phinma and Bacnotan will get the first crack at the shares to be issued by PPHC.

Phinma owns 60 percent of PPHC while Bacnotan holds 35 percent. The remaining 5 percent is held by the public.

Hilado also said the Phinma Group is looking at a possible initial public offering for PPHC in the next three years.

PPHC will use the proceeds from its stock rights issue to finance three new condominium projects: a 750-unit condominium in Fairview, a walk-up condominium in Sucat, and an annex to its Spazio Bernardo condominium in Quezon City, which has 300 units. This will add to Spazio's 957 units.

Revenues from PPHC and Bacnotan's other subsidiary, Union Galvasteel Corp.; had pushed up Bacnotan's earnings in the first half to P112 million from P66 million in the same period last year.

Bacnotan is planning to acquire new university in the provinces and the power plants that will be privatized by the government.

It is considering bidding particularly for the Tiwi-Makban geothermal plant and the Masinloc and Calaca coal-fired plants.

GOINGS-ON

SME Center

THE CHINESE-FILIPINO BUSINESS CLUB INC. will inaugurate the first-ever Small and Medium Enterprise Center in the country on July 17.

The project is one of the highlights of the yearly celebration of the SME Development Week on July 17-22.

The center's inauguration will be followed by the "Manila Innoventions Fair," which will showcase Manila inventors' award-winning products. CFBCI will also hold a series of seminars and training.

Panasonic's marketing seminar

PANASONIC MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES Corp. will hold a seminar on trade marketing and key account management on July 20 to 21 at its main office in Taytay, Rizal.

Sponsored by the Foundation for Asian Management Development (FAMD), the seminar is aimed at helping companies align their sales force with their brand building program. FAMD is a Japan-based organization that assists SMEs in Asia in upgrading their management development efforts.

Media Atlas initiative

SYNOVATE, A LEADING GLOBAL MARKET research company, announced that an industry-backed media survey had started in the Philippines. The survey, known as Synovate Media Atlas, will initially cover Greater Manila, covering the social classes of most interest to marketers, media specialists and media owners.

An advisory panel, composed of media specialists and major advertisers, stressed the need for a media survey that will capture a complete cross-section of the target social groups.

"This is a major step ahead for our industry, which has been starved of good information about the structure, purchasing power and media habits of consumers, notably within the Greater Manila area," the advisory panel's retiring chair Javier Jose Calero said.

Gov't hybrid rice program seen losing participants

FARMERS ARE DROPPING OUT OF the government's rice program amid reports of hybrid seed variety failure and a controversial subsidy scheme favoring a lone seed supplier.

A study of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) showed that the Department of Agriculture's Hybrid Rice Commercialization Program (HRCP) was losing farmer-participants at an alarming rate.

"Around 68 to 78 percent of the farmer-beneficiaries immediately stopped using the hybrid rice technology after only one (cropping) season or four months," said the PIDS study which covered 17 provinces implementing the HRCP.

This was apparently because the program did not do much to increase rice yields.

A 2005 study of the Southeast Asian Regional Institute for Community Empowerment (SeaRice) showed that of four provinces using the hybrid variety, only Nueva Ecija registered some harvest increase.

The hybrid rice variety posted performances inferior to the traditional local inbred variety, SeaRice said.

The HCRP is supposed to be the Arroyo government's centerpiece program for food sufficiency.

The program came under fire from several major international companies due to its preferred supplier subsidy feature. Bayer Cropscience Inc. said giving the subsidy to only one supplier was "price distorting."

The program was also criticized by one of the country's biggest farmer groups. The North Luzon-based West Tanat Multipurpose Cooperative (WTMC) had asked the DA to review the quality of the hybrid rice seeds being distributed under the program.

The WTMC expressed concern that the poor performance of the hybrid rice variety might be due to the quality of seeds distributed by the seed supplier.

Farmer-leader and WTMC chair Melany Aquino urged the DA to look into this because the hybrid rice program's acceptability and credibility might be adversely affected by the quality of the seeds being distributed by the lone seed supplier.

Remittances sent via informal channels declining

By Doris C. Dumlao

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS' REmittances slipping past banking channels have gone down to 10 percent of the total inflows, from about 20 percent last year, due to local banks' aggressive efforts to corner the bulk of the cash transfer business, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas estimated.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters on Friday that based on latest government surveys, more OFWs were now coursing their remittances through banks. In computing the country's balance of payments, he said the BSP was now assuming that OFW remittances coursed through informal channels amounted to only 10 percent.

Only last year, the BSP assumed in the BOP that 20 percent of the OFW remittances came in through informal channels, defined as unlicensed or unregulated operations. This assumption is considered conservative if compared with the 25-30 percent shown in various surveys.

OFW inflows to the country, including those coursed through the informal channels, hit $11.5 billion last year.

The BSP assumed that remittances coursed through informal channels had gone down to 15 percent late last year. It continued using the 15 percent assumption early this year but it later decided to slash the rate further to 10 percent as more inflows were now being captured by the banks.

Based on the latest estimate, the annual OFW remittance leakages or those sent to informal channels had gone down from as high as $2.5-$3 billion last year to only about $1 billion.

This developed as Philippine banks continued to strengthen their capacity to handle cash transfers from the overseas market. For instance, RCBC TeleMoney, the remittance arm of the Yuchengcos' Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., inked on Friday a strategic partnership with US-based Travelex Money Transfer (TMT)—the first international remittance provider to do account deposit, home delivery and mobile phone transactions in the Philippines.

Through the tie-up with TMT and its local representative, Asian FX Money Exchange, OFW beneficiaries can receive their TMT remittances at any of the 178 business centers of RCBC, said RCBC senior vice president and TeleMoney Group head Cynthia Santos.

RCBC TeleMoney offers cash transfer services through over 500 remittance centers, agents and tie-ups in 24 countries with high OFW populations.

RCBC is among the country's top five players in the remittance business. Other leading players are Bank of the Philippine Islands, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Philippine National Bank and Equitable PCIBank.

A study of the Asian Development Bank showed that as of last year, about 38 percent of the recipients in the Philippines preferred the informal method, primarily due to lower transaction costs.

Another previous study on the Mexican experience showed that remittances held as deposits in the banking system had a beneficial multiplier effect of between two to three times as these could be channeled to investments including small and microbusinesses. As such, the BSP is promoting the use of formal banking channels as a safer and more productive cash remittance system for millions of Filipinos working abroad.

Pinay kids' author joins world-class writers in HK

MAN HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL Literary Festival is Asia's leading literary festival, and a Filipino writer of children's books was among this year's invitees along with a Nobel laureate and other world-class authors.

Gidget Jimenez, mother of three, and author of three popular children's books published by Tahanan Books for Young Readers, was one of two Filipino authors invited to the recently held literary festival in Hong Kong.

This year the festival organizers increased the festival's focus on young readers, thus, the presence of Gidget Jimenez along with some of the best known children's book writers around the world.

GIDGET, mom Kai and Joel Jimenez

The festival organizers also encouraged an expanded delegation from China, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Hong Kong in keeping with the festival's role as the leading literary festival in Asia.

Seamus Heaney, the Irish poet and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 1995, and John Banville, the Irish novelist and the winner of the United Kingdom-based Booker Prize for Fiction 2005, were among the most notable invitees.

The main festival activities included poetry and fiction reading sessions, lectures at Hong Kong University, sessions on the craft of writing and advice on how to get published.

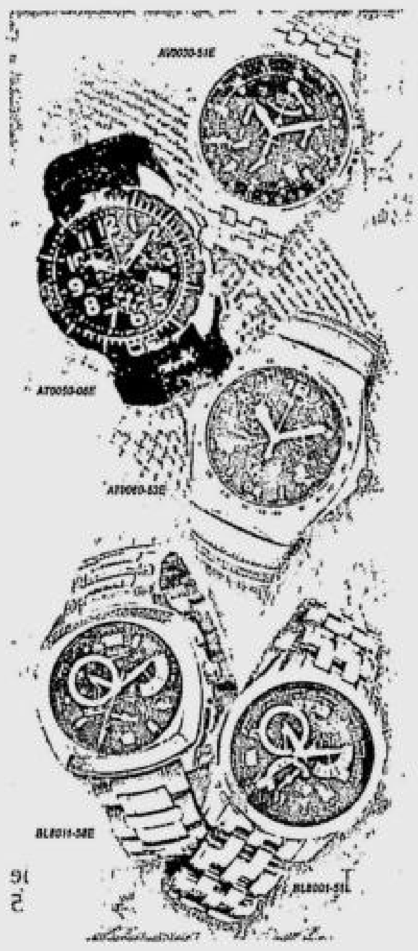
Gidget Jimenez started making up bedtime stories to entertain her children. Three of those stories were published by Tahanan Books For Young Readers: "Tubble Wobble: The Clumsy Little Turtle" (1998); "Squirt Magert: The Friday Frog" (2000); and "Maya Maya Jambalaya" (2001).

All the books, published in fine glossy paper, are written in verse that rhymes and is illustrated by Pepper Roxas. They are available in leading bookshops and are being used in some schools in Metro Manila.

Gidget Jimenez is a former retail executive who holds a masters degree in applied business economics from the Center of Research and Communication. She is a founder of Moms on the Move (MOMs), an organization that provides helpful materials for Filipino parents on how to raise young children. How she fell into the world of children's books she attributes to luck and the Lord's handiwork. She is married to Joel G. Jimenez, younger brother of PLDT executive VP Butch Jimenez.

JCI WORLD VP ATTENDS CAVITE INDUCTION
Junior Chamber International (Jaycees) world vice president JCI senator Takahiro Goto attended the mass induction of Cavite League of Jaycees 2006 officers and board members hosted by the JCIP-Bacoor Pambungad Chapter held May 13 at the Walk In Trade Center, Bacoor, Cavite. Shown, at right, is Goto receiving the plaque from JCI member Edward Solis, NEVP for Area 3, JCI senator Ismael Penado, JCIP national president, JCI senator Dino Macayan, NVP STR West, JCI senator Raphael Lesaca, JCIP national secretary general and JCI senator Renato Dragon, presidential adviser.

Converting light into energy



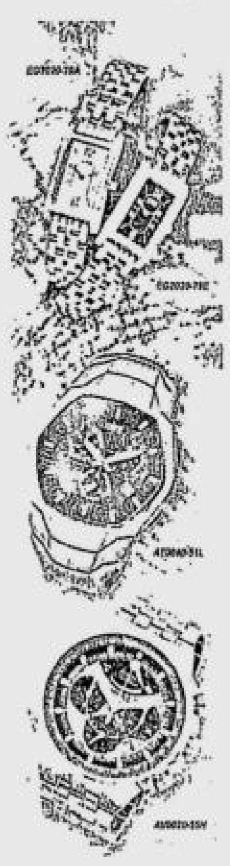
IMAGINE HAVING A watch that never needs a battery change. Well, no need to imagine because that is what the Citizen Eco-Drive is all about.

It all begins with a light source. In fact, any light will do. In the past what watches used was solar power which meant power from the sun. But with Eco-Drive it could be a light bulb, a candle or even the light emanating from your cell phone. You can even put the watch aside for a period of time and it will start to operate as soon as it is exposed to any light source.

How it works is very simple, but the technology behind it is amazing. A light source goes through the watch glass and dial. The conversion panel beneath the dial transforms it into energy. This energy is then stored in a high-powered lithium-ion rechargeable cell that powers the watch to precision operation. This will power your watch for up to six months.

Because you never have to change your battery, Citizen Eco-Drive is also environment friendly.

This breakthrough technology is part of Citizen's continuous effort of producing the perfect timepiece. In line with this development, Citizen still makes sure that its design fits today's lifestyle. A perfect combination of style and technology is what Citizen Eco-Drive watches are all about.



Soy helps lessen menopausal symptoms

AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TAKE ON A healthier lifestyle, consumption of soy has increased in the last several years. A number of health benefits have been attributed to soy, including reduction of risk for heart disease and lessening of menopausal symptoms such as vaginal dryness, hot flashes and night sweat.

The health benefits of soy are derived mostly from isoflavones, a type of phytoestrogen. Isoflavones such as Daidzein and Genistein are plant-derived substances which have been shown to improve symptoms of menopausal women.

Menopause, which refers to the cessation of menstrual period, normally happens when a woman reaches her 40s. At this stage, the level of estrogen produced by the body declines.

Daidzen and Genistein mimic estrogen effects in the body which could be beneficial for conditions caused by the decline in estrogen level. Isoflavones found in soy products such as tofu, miso and soymilk can also be found in Her Soy Plus, but less amount of purine per 100mg capsule. Too much purine consumption increases uric acid level.

Her Soy Plus, which contains no less than 85 percent Daidzen and Genistein soy isoflavones, helps alleviate menopausal symptoms, promoting health and wellness within a few weeks of recommended use. Her Soy Plus also contains calcium lactate and vitamin D3 which may also help prevent osteoporosis.

Her Soy Plus is imported and distributed by New Smart Formulae Trading Corp. It is available at Mercury Drug and other leading drug stores nationwide. For more information on Her Soy Plus, call 374-6182 or 374-6179.

From Manila to Moscow... and back

AEROFLOT, THE LARGEST AIR CARRIER IN Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), carries the flag of the Russian Federation. Aeroflot's "Sincerely Yours" promises guaranteed service, quality and safety compliments of the Skyteam's "Caring More About You" mission. The SkyTeam is the first global airline alliance to welcome a Russian carrier and was voted Best Airline Alliance in 2005 by readers of Global Traveler Magazine.

Aeroflot officially started its operations in Manila with a grand launch at the executive lounge of Ayala Tower One May 17. It was an evening of free-flowing vodka, VIPs, Russian culture and trivia. For all those who were there, including the Ambassador and Ms Anatoly Nebogatov, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, Neda Sec. Romulo Neri, Sen. Joker Arroyo and BSP Governor Amando Tetangco, it was an evening to bridge the distance-both geographically and culturally-between Manila and Moscow.

For travel inquiries to Russia, Commonwealth of Independent States or anywhere in the world, e-mail Aeroflot at inquire@aeroflotph.com or call 892-7764, 893-1418, 759-2191, 759-2192 and telefax 892-7693.

Bits Clips

Eye-opening seminar

WHO SAYS WE NEED TO WEAR EYEGLASSES or contact lens or have surgery to correct our vision problems? Not Leo Angart, business consultant, author and trainer. We can improve our eyesight naturally-without pills, devices, or surgery, he says. On Aug. 18 to 21, he demonstrates this through workshops "Vision Training" (for adults) and "Magic Eyes" (for children) at the Prince Plaza in Makati City. The workshops will address vision problems such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, glaucoma, dependence on reading glasses, "lazy eye", and strabismus, through such techniques as simple eye exercises, relaxing and energizing the eyes through palming, visualization, acupressure, good nutrition, and the NLP hypnotherapy. For details, log on to www.vision-training.com or call the PV Center for Self-Empowerment at 753-2909/10, or e-mail selfempowerment_ph@yahoo.com.

Writing for children workshop

ADARNA HOUSE, THE COUNTRY'S LEADING CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBlisher, is mounting the 5th Barlaya Writing for Children Workshop. Barlaya is designed to help aspiring writers for children to enhance their craft. Ten writing fellows will be chosen based on the literary merit of their submitted stories. Interested parties should submit three copies of one original, unpublished story to Adarna House at Room 102 JGS Building, 30 Scout Tuazon Street, Quezon City. Entries should be typewritten, double-spaced, and should not exceed five pages. All entries should be accompanied by a one-page backgrounder on the writer. The deadline for submission is on Aug. 11. For inquiries, call 372-3548 local 108 and look for Aneka.

ProductFiles

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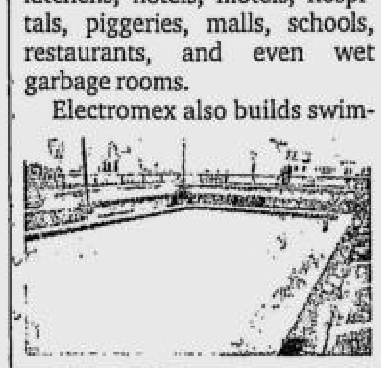
ELECTROMEX INC BUILDS Ozonators, or Ozone generators, that kill odor-causing airborne germs. Triple oxygen (O3) is a radical gas that kills bacteria on contact. Electromex Ozonators are made to remove any foul odors without the use of chemicals such as chlorox, alcohol or air fresheners. It is guaranteed to remove odor from cars, toilets, kitchens, hotels, motels, hospitals, piggeries, malls, schools, restaurants, and even wet garbage rooms.

Electromex also builds swimming pool Ozonators for zero chlorine water treatment. Ozone kills bacteria and fungus-causing algae (lumot) 300 times better than chlorine. There's no need to use muriatic acid or cancer-causing chlorine, forever. The water Ozonators can be used for overhead water tanks of buildings, factories, and subdivisions, too. Your family will now enjoy swimming in a giant mineral water pool.

For more details, call 531-6782, 535-9069, or visit www.electromexinc.com.



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KX-FL512

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Document Feeder	10 sheets	10 sheets	10 sheets	10 sheets	10 sheets	10 sheets	20 sheets
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Copy Speed				4 PPM	4 PPM	4 PPM	10 PPM
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Document Memory		20 pages (max)	20 pages (max)	28 pages (max)	28 pages (max)	28 pages (max)	170 pages (max)
Digital Answering System			●		●	●	
Sequential Broadcast		10 locations	10 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations
Printer Function						●	●
Scanner Function						●	●
PC Fax						●	
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Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY-BATAAN ECONOMIC ZONE (PEZA-BEZ) through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2006 intends to apply the sum as indicated below being the **Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)** to payments under the contracts for the projects located at the Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan as listed hereunder:

Project No.	Name of Contract	Approved Budget For the Contract (ABC) (Php)
I.	RE-ROOFING OF SFB #11	3,924,359.31
II.	RE-ROOFING AND REPAIR OF PARAPET AT SFB #3	6,019,796.35
III.	RE-ROOFING AND REPAIR OF PARAPET AT SFB #5	6,019,796.35

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

2. The PEZA-BEZ now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the above mentioned projects for the supply and installation of **uPVC (Thermoplastic Roofing panels, rib-type, long span and accessories.** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB License and classified as "Medium A" for buildings, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC for each project and meet the other minium eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened and a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post qualification.

The Schedule of Activities for the projects is as follows:

Project No.	Receipt of LOI Issuance & price of Eligibility Forms/ Documents/Non-Refundable	Deadline for Submission of Accomplished Eligibility Documents	Issuance & Price of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable)	Duration of Contract	Pre-Bid Conference	Opening of Bids
I.	Php 100.00 July 17-21,2006 8:00 A.M-5:00 P.M.	5:00 P.M. Aug. 2, 2006	Php 2,000.00 Aug 16-18 2006	90 CD	2:00 P.M. Aug. 24, 2006	2:00 P.M. Sept. 7 2006
II.	Php 100.00 July 17-21, 2006 8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.	5:00 P.M. Aug. 2, 2006 5:00 P.M.	Php 5,000.00 Aug. 16-18, 2006	90 CD	3:00 P.M. Aug. 24, 2006	3:00 P.M. Sept. 7. 2006
III.	Php 100.00 July 17-21, 2006 8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M. BAC Secretariat EMD Office, Grd. Flr., BEZ Admin. Bldg	5:00 P.M. BAC Secretariat EMD Office, Grd. Flr., BEZ Admin Bldg	Php 5,000.00 Aug. 16-18, 2006 BAC Secretariat/Finance Div., Grd. Flr., BEZ Admin. Bldg	90 CD	4:00 P.M. Aug. 24, 2006 AV Room, 2nd Flr., BEZ Admin. Bldg	4:00 P.M. Sept. 7. 2006 AV Room, 2nd Flr., BEZ Admin. Bldg.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZ and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays. The method of payment for Bid Documents will be on a **cash basis only**. The Bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

5. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 1:30 p.m. of September 7, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, manager's check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of not less than Php 39,243.59 for Project I and Php 60,197.96 each for Projects II and III, Bank Guarantee in the amount of not less than Php 58,865.39 for Project I and Php 90,296.94 each for Projects II & III, or in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than Php 98,108.98 for Project I and Php 150,494.91 each for Projects II & III. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

6. Bid opening shall be on 7 September 2006 as mentioned above and will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative who choose to attend.

7. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.

8. The PEZA-BEZ reserves the right to accept any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority – BEZ
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Ground Floor, EMD Office, BEZ
Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan
Tel. Nos. (047) 935-4008; (047) 935-5002 / Fax No. (047) 935-6046

E-mail: bez@unit.net.ph
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **DIONISIO T. SAMEN**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

Noted:

(Sgd.) **CHARLES M. RAMONES**
Officer-in-Charge, BEZ

(PDI–July 10 & 17, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region IV, Balagtas, Batangas City
Tel. No. 043-723-3325 / 043-402-1878
Fax No. 043-723-0449 / 043-402-0189
Website: www.nfa.gov.ph E-mail Add.: nfaro4_rbac@yahoo.com

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, Regional Office IV, with its official address at Brgy. Balagtas, Batangas City through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites sack manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of brand new white polypropylene empty sack (MTS) for Iron Fortified Rice as indicated below:

EMPTY SACK TYPE	QUANTITY (PIECES)	Approved Budget for for the Contract (ABC)	DELIVERY POINT
Rice (PPMG50)	270,000	P 2,389,500.00	NFA-Batangas

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Biodding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 17-31, 2006 (excl. Sat., Sun.
	& Holidays)
2. Pre-bid Conference	August 04, 2006 at 10:00 am
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	August 17, 2006 at 10:00 am
4. Bid Evaluation	August 18-24, 2006
5. Post-qualification	August 25-31, 2006
6. Notice of Award	September 12, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 2,500.00 to the National Food Authority's Cashier.

The mode of payment shall be in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY REGION IV assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY REGION IV reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Bids and to annul the bidding process at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders, whatsoever.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) TOMAS R. ESCAREZ
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – July 17 & 23, 2006)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
654 pcs. 14K Gold Ring	P9,221,400.00	July 20, 2006 2:00 pm	August 2, 2006 1:00 PM	P 4,700.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting July 10, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at GSD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the LBP-Requisitions Management Division at telephone nos. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI-July 10 & 17, 2006)
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

AUCTION

www.henrybutcher.com

SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION

ON: TUESDAY 18TH JULY 2006 - 10:30AM SHARP
Refundable Deposit: Php5,000 (upon registration)

Location of Sale: Henry Butcher Auction Center
Hilon Compound, Bo. Mayapa, Canlubang, Laguna
On View: Monday 17th July 2006 - 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day

UNUSED MACHINE SPARES: Solenoid Valves; Flow Indicators; Ball Bearings; Bearing Caps; Air Filters; Thermowell Sensors; Gear Belts; Check Valves, Seal; Seal Kits; Insulation Switches; Manifolds; Plate Clamps; Hub Clamps; Shafts; Couplings; Hydraulic Filters; Repair Kits, Limit Switches; O-Rings; Guide Shafts; Oil Seals; Heater Elements; etc.

INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENTS: ISAKI 6 kva Generator; MYCOM N200L SRM Screw Compressors w/ Condensing Units; BROOK HANSEN 350HP Electric Motors; ABB 250HP Electric Motor; RELIANCE 50HP Electric Motor; RELIANCE 30HP Electric Motor; BALDOR Electric Motors, MAGNETEK Electric Motors; TIGEAR Gear Boxes; etc.

ICE CREAM EQUIPMENT DREYERS Soft Ice Cream Dispenser; MGR Stainless Floor Type Refrigerator; GRAM Freezer; FERRO ILLE Hydrotherapy Stainless Steel Pool; Stainless Steel Mixing Bowls; Electric Compressors; etc.

POWER/HAND TOOLS: OSAKA OJ Mechanical Jack 25 Tons Cap. 250 MM Stroke with Lever; MAKITA Drill & Grinder Sets; MAKITA Angle Grinders; MAKITA Pencil Grinders; BLACK & DECKER Pencil Grinders; CRESCENT 148 PC Professional Tool Sets; CRESCENT Tounge & Groove Plier Set; VISE GRIP Locking Pliers, 6 pc Screwdriver Sets; KS-100 Impulse Sealer; etc.

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Location of Assets: Fibertex Corporation - Km. 26, Bo. Dolores, Taytay, Rizal
On View: Strictly by Appointment

PLASTIC INJECTION MOULDING MACHINES: Goldstar 'IDE-140 EN' Plastic Injection Moulding Machine; Dong Shin 'PRO-220' Plastic Injection Moulding Machine; Dong Shin 'Promax 100' Plastic Injection Moulding Machine; Hyundai '150' Plastic Injection Moulding Machine; Dong Kwang 'NTC-730' Mold Temp Controller, 4 Bagger Mixing Silo c/w Sharp Star

For further information please contact Carol Cosca at Tel: 049-834-6541
Email: carol.cosca@henrybutcher.com

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INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND FOR BIDS

The Tarlac I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (TARELCO I) invites qualified bidders for the long term supply of the TARELCO I power requirements commencing in the year 2010.

Interested parties should sumbit their company profile, duly notarized authorized representative and primary contact person to:

THE GENERAL MANAGER
Tarlac I Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Amalacan, Gerona, Tarlac
Tel Nos. (045) 931-2212, 931-2254
Fax No. (045) 931-0974

You may submit the above requirements starting July 19, 2006 until August 2, 2006.

Only those qualified by the PBAC shall be invited to BID.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RESURRECCION R. CORONEL
General Manager

(PDI - July 17 & 18, 2006)

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- Other well-known brands of elevators in the Philippines
- Minimum two (2) years experience in maintenance/installation of lifts (elevators)
- Ability for troubleshooting & Diagnostics
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GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS, REQUIRED DOCUMENTS, ET AL ...

✓ Male, 25 to 40 years old @ least High School Graduate or a Graduate of Special-Vocational Courses
✓ Curriculum Vitae/Resume/Bio-data with four (4) pcs. 2x2"-size colored pictures
✓ Certificates of Employment, NBI clearance (6-months valid) & Passport *(photocopy)*
✓ College Degree Diploma holders *(or undergraduates)* will be a plus, TOC *(Transcript of Records)*, Trade Test Certificate *(if and when available)*, or TESDA COC *(Certificate of Competency)*
✓ Availability of Gulf – issued driving license *(light vehicle)* during application, if any, will also be a plus factor!

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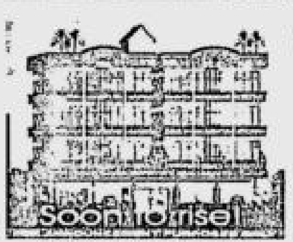

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP), thru its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective Consultants to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Consultancy Services for the proposed Audit Investigation of the Various Buildings and Utilities** at the BSP Main Complex

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for this consultancy services is **P12.0 Million.**

The scope of the work includes among others the Investigation, Testing and Audit including preparation of the Architectural and Engineering as-built plans for the five (5) buildings (5-Storey, Multi-Storey, Cafetorium, EDPC Metropolitan Museum and Site Development Plan) of the BSP Main Complex.

The list of minimum eligibility requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective consultancy firm shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Interested consultancy firm must meet the following criteria:

1.0 The firm must have been in operation for the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) engaging in the lawful practice of the type of consulting services called for in this invitation.

2.0 The firm must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) A and E Consultancy Services for at least three (3) Investigation, Testing and Audit projects including preparation of the Architectural & Engineering as-built plans of office buildings, banks, exchanges and financial institutions of similar or greater magnitude as the proposed BSP project and must be able to submit a certification of satisfactory performance from the client for at least two (2) of the required three (3) projects.

3.0 The Principal or Managing Officer must be a Registered Engineer or Architect with at least fifteen (15) years experience in architectural and engineering design and in coordinating team efforts in A & E Consultancy Services.

4.0 The key personnel should be Registered Architect/s, Civil Engineer/s, Professional Mechanical Engineer/s and Professional Electrical Engineer/s with at least ten (10) years design experience.

5.0 The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) must be at least 60% owned by a Filipino citizen. (Foreign consultants must be registered with SEC and/or any agency authorized by the laws of the Philippines.

6.0 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint venture agreement shall be required. The joint venture must have rendered A and E Consultancy Services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.

7.0 For those firms with previous Consultancy Services with the BSP/PICC, a certificate of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank must be submitted.

The quality-cost based evaluation procedure stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 9184 shall be adopted for this consultancy service requirement.

Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat on 17-31 July 2006 upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00, Room 213, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila and must be submitted duly accomplished to the same office not later than 2 p.m. on 8 August 2006.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and make no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the consultant for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–July 17, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Trade and Industry
Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE CONTRACTORS ACCREDITATION BOARD
2nd Floor, Jupiter I Building, #56 Jupiter Street,
Bel-Air Village, Makati City, Philippines 1209
Tel. No. (632) 895-4258

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Please be advised that as per PCAB Board resolution No. 484, s. 2006, the Board **RESOLVED** to extend the grant/issuance of temporary license (CFY 2006-2007) to contractors who filed their renewal applications on or before July 31, 2006, provided that the applicants have been issued the license for CFY 2005-2006.

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892-5578; 811-4361; 811-4370

KALAW :
528-0213; 527-3342

MEGAMALL :
635-0219; 635-0220

CAPT. ANTONIO "TONY" O. DOMINGUEZ

May 14, 1927 – July 15, 2006

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on July 15, 2006 at the age of 79.*

His bereaved wife **Angeline "Nina"**; brothers **Carlos, Jr.** (†), **Armando** (†) and **Frank**; children **Gloria D.** and **Freddie Garcia**, **David** and **Jean Dominguez**, **Eileen** and **Ruben Rodriguez**, and **Emilie**; grandchildren **Miguel** and **Zan Garcia**, **Anna G.** and **Rey Jose**, **Richie Garcia**, **Carlo** and **Kaye Garcia**; **Bea**, **Anton**, **Jerome**, and **Juan**; great grandchildren **Cristian**, **Javy**, **Ethan**, **Andrei** and **Paco**; nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul and everlasting joy in the eternal Kingdom of our Creator.

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Consolation Parish (Bahay Recoletos Community Center Building) OLCP de Mira-Nila Ministry Corp., 81 Alondras St., Mira-Nila Homes, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 18, 2006. Mass at 10:00 a.m., funeral follows after.

"There is an appointed time for everything
and a time for every affair under the heavens...
A time to be born & a time to die.....
Whatever God does will endure forever..."
Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2 & 14

Thelma Solinap Buenaflor Armada

(October 21, 1936 – July 2, 2006)

*has peacefully joined our Creator
at the age of 69.*

She is survived by her husband, **Atty. Gil B. Armada**; *children:* **Gil Jr.** & **Merlin**, **Nestor** & **Grace**, **Lucia** & **John Richard**, **Arsenio** & **Dayene**, *and* **Obet** & **Tingting**; *grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brothers, sister and relatives.*

Her remains lie in state at the family residence at ***La Paz, Iloilo City****. Interment is on* ***Saturday, July 22, 2006*** *at the* ***Janiuay Catholic Cemetery*** *after the* ***1 p.m. Mass****, to be officiated by* ***His Grace, Most Reverend Angel Lagdameo, D.D., Archbishop of Jaro*** *at* ***St. Clement's Church, La Paz, Iloilo City.***

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

GLORIA RAMALLOSA DY SUN
March 25,1921 – July 14, 2006

Peacefully joined our Lord and her beloved husband, the late Dr. Vicente Dy Sun, Sr. on July 14, 2006 at the age of 85.

Her bereaved children Vicente, Jr. (+) & Rosario, Norma Edita & Donelcio, J. Victory & Olivia, Alberto & Margarita, Alfredo (+). Her Grandchildren Leslie Ann & Luis Joaquin, Lindsay Joy, Laurie Jane, Kathleen Lourdes, Mary Ann & Reynaldo, Jennifer, Michael Eric & Arlene, Jonathan & Ma. Rustica, Rachelle & Jack, Aldrin Vincent & Leslie Beth, Valerie Gloriane, Allen Victor and Melody Jane, great-grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in their prayers for the eternal repose of her soul and everlasting joy in the eternal kingdom of our Creator.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel Felicidad, Arlington Funeral Homes, at G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on July 22, 2006, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. at the Family Private Mausoleum at the Chinese Cemetery, Jose P. Rizal Avenue Extension, Sta. Cruz, Metro Manila.

Note: Please refrain from sending flowers.

PATRICIA NUEVO ILAGAN

of Alaminos, Laguna

Peacefully joined the Lord on July 8, 2006 at the age of 94.

Her children **EVA**, **PERLA** and **YOLANDA**, her loving grandchildren & great grandchildren request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains lie at Chapel C, St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

A memorial service will be held on Monday night, July 17, 2006 at 6:00 P.M.

Interment will be at Himlayan Pilipino on Tuesday, 10:00 A.M., July 18, 2006.

To the family and friends of the late

EDUARDO "DANDING" A. RESTAN

(October 5, 1938 - July 14, 2006)

Now peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 67.

His wife **Araceli**, children **Genaline** and **Dennis**, **Ohgie** and **Daisylyn** and grandchildren **Genica**, **Edward**, **Ma. Cristina** and **Alexandra** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Resurrection Hall, Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar Bldg., St. Ferdinand Cathedral, Lucena City.

Interment will be on July 18, 2006 at Lucena Memorial Park, Lucena City.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

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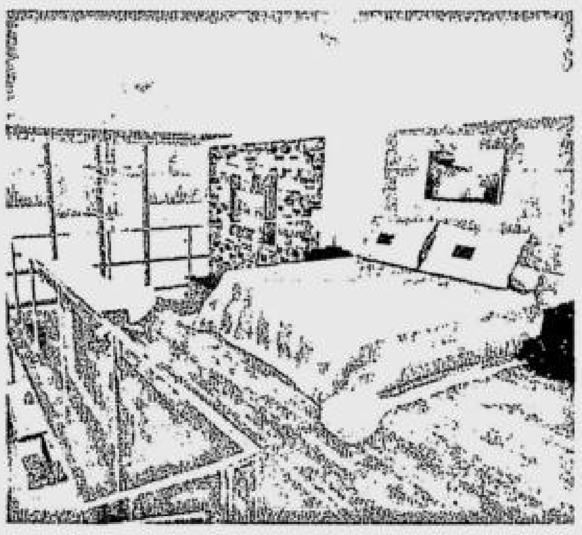

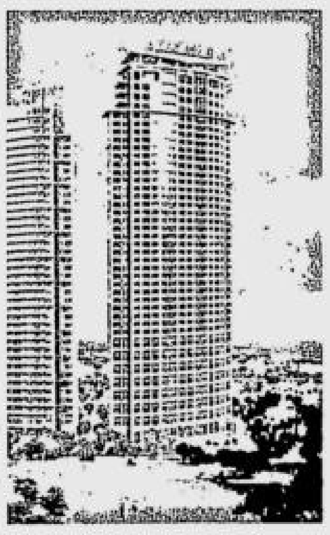

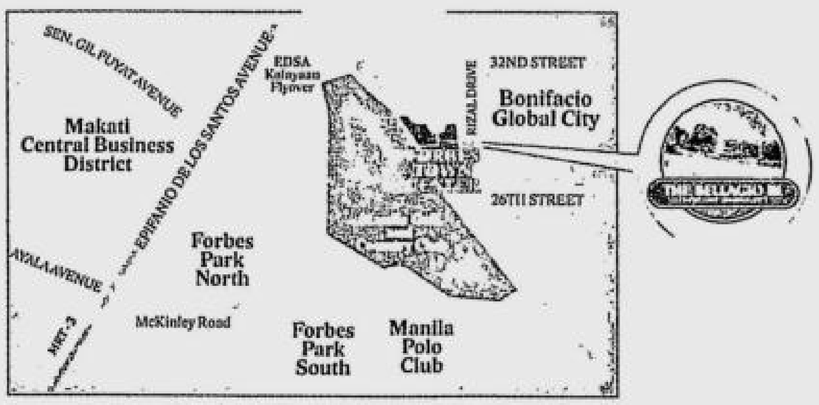
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Max's gets Krispy Kreme franchise

HOT Original Glazed doughnuts

WINSTON-SALEM, NC—Krispy Kreme Doughnuts Inc. (NYSE: KKD) has awarded development rights for the Philippines to The Real American Doughnut Company Inc., owned and operated by the principals of Max's, one of the Philippines' leading restaurant chains.

Krispy Kreme's development agreement with The Real American Doughnut Company Inc. calls for the development of approximately 30 locations over the next five years, with the first location scheduled to open by the end of 2006. The Real American Doughnut Company Inc. will hold a 100 percent ownership interest in the franchise.

"We are pleased to continue expanding Krispy Kreme's international reach with our franchisee in the Philippines," said Daryl Brewster, president and chief executive officer of Krispy Kreme.

"We are proud to partner with Max's," said Jeff Welch, Krispy Kreme's senior vice president of International and Development. "We believe that Max's, with over sixty years of experience operating restaurants in the Philippines, is uniquely qualified to introduce Krispy Kreme to this important marketplace."

"We are looking forward to bringing Krispy Kreme and the hot doughnut experience to our customers," said Robert Trota, President of Max's Franchising Inc.

About Krispy Kreme

Founded in 1937 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Krispy Kreme is a leading branded retailer and wholesaler of high-quality doughnuts, including its signature Hot Original Glazed™.

There are some 310 Krispy Kreme stores and 90 satellites operating systemwide in the US, Australia, Canada, Mexico, South Korea and the UK.

About Max's

Founded in 1945, Max's is a leading Philippine restaurant specializing in chicken and traditional Filipino food.

Max's was started by Maximo Gimenez, a Stanford-educated teacher.

There are currently approximately 118 Max's Restaurants operating in the Philippines and the US.

Wanted: Social entrepreneurs

Aim is to help other firms become financially viable

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE THAN TAX breaks and other come-ons from the government, the biggest incentives for entrepreneurs are still the basics-access to equity financing and training, an environment conducive to doing business, and opportunities to acquire management and marketing savvy.

Eduardo A. Morato Jr., a professor at the Asian Institute of Management, says understanding the actual predicament of struggling business operators would be a great help for the so-called social entrepreneurs—the catalysts that drive the development of entrepreneurship.

Morato differentiates between the business entrepreneur—whose basic aim is to maximize financial returns—and the social entrepreneur who places more importance on financial sustainability.

"(The latter's) goal is to uplift the lives and improve the well-being of underprivileged and disadvantaged groups," the former AIM dean explains.

To achieve that goal, Morato says social entrepreneurs need a better appreciation of what motivates, encourages and influences entrepreneurs to start a business and stay in business.

A major research he undertook found that, among 180 respondents, personal resources is deemed very important because in most cases a business cannot start without it.

Morato says an earlier, related study—which the International Labor Organization commissioned to the Foundation for Rural Economic Enterprises and Development in 1996—may explain his own.

The FREED study surveyed 1,341 microenterprises in the urban informal sector showed that one out of five respondents relied on personal savings to finance their ventures.

Of the funds that came from loans, 29 percent came from relatives; 41 percent from loan sharks; 6 percent from banks, 6 percent from cooperatives; and 21 percent from other formal sources like lending investors.

Morato says entrepreneurs rely on their own resources because there is very limited equity or venture financing in the country.

Equity financing includes the small business owners' personal resources like inheritance, savings, or proceeds from the sale of assets. But Morato says more is needed from outside investors.

MORATO

That means equity financing in the form of stockholders shares as what angel investors create when they provide funding.

[Interestingly, other authorities say that while angel investors unrelated to the entrepreneur are much touted as sources of equity financing, the main sources of such funds for small ventures continue to be family and friends.]

"What the venture capital corporations, formed jointly by commercial banks and the government during the Marcos period, provide are transaction financing," Morato says.

"The government financial institutions have no equity financing windows except for FIs like rural and development banks that they have supported in the past," he adds.

Morato says social entrepreneurs, as well as public development agencies, should design and promote equity financing.

He adds that government's greatest input to encourage entrepreneurship is providing an environment that is secure and conducive to business.

Small business would also be encouraged by limiting obstacles, regulations and trade barriers as well as reducing graft and corruption.

"We can see through the past few decades that the dramatic growth in new enterprises coincided with periods of high political and social stability such as the first seven years of Martial Law, the first three years of the Aquino administration, and the entire six years of President Fidel Ramos," Morato says.

On the other hand, abrupt falls coincided with periods of high political and social instability such as the waning years of the Marcos presidency, the last three years of Aquino in Malacañang, and the years of President Joseph Estrada.

Once enterprises have gained a strong foothold, social entrepreneurs need to help business owners master supply chain management, have access to markets and adopt modern management practices.

"The greatest challenge for social entrepreneurs and their organizations is to become more social and more entrepreneurial," Morato says.

The point is, he says, not just to provide money but to change the way business is done and the people involved in the enterprise.

"Focusing on the entrepreneurial poor, loan officers should be more conscious that their job is not simply to lend money but to nurture and grow the livelihood of clients."

JULY marks the end of the peak season of fishing in Magallanes.
JUAN ESCANDOR JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Sardines create fishing industry in small town

MAGALLANES, SORSOGON—THERE WAS hardly a fishing industry here to speak of until two years ago when Sorsogon Bay yielded an unprecedented volume of "*lawlaw*" or fimbriated sardines.

Chiven Balaoro, 45, owns one of the lawlaw buying stations that sprouted in 2004 when sardines started visiting Sorsogon Bay from January to July.

He says four firms were immediately put up that year to trade lawlaw because supply was so huge that the catch the locals could not consume was just returned to sea.

The lawlaw is back again this year, but the volume is not as big as before, Balaoro says.

The good months run from January to July, then dips until December.

To take advantage of the excess supply, Balaoro says trading firms linked with canning companies in Metro Manila who were willing to take on the excess sardines.

From just four buying stations, the lawlaw industry here has grown to include more than 20 buying stations, with proprietors coming from as far as Nueva Ecija.

Sorsogon Bay is one of the bodies of water in Bicol included in the Fisheries Sector Program of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, which started in 1990.

The program is funded by the Asian Development Bank.

The Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) here says, however, that the phenomenal increase in the lawlaw population in Sorsogon Bay is not all good news because it means that there are no more big fish in the area who eat the lawlaw.

But Butch Gricalda, 26, a fisherman in this town, is not complaining.

From earning just P800 from every fishing trip, he now earns a gross of P4,000-P5,000 from catching lawlaw.

The trading firms are likewise earning.

Balaoro says that over the past two years, the buy-and-sell operation has been transporting from 150 to 500 boxes of packaged lawlaw to the canning factories in Manila.

"That's from a small truck to a ten-wheeler truck," he adds.

The newfound industry likewise benefits the laborers hired to haul, repackage and

SARDINES/ B2-2

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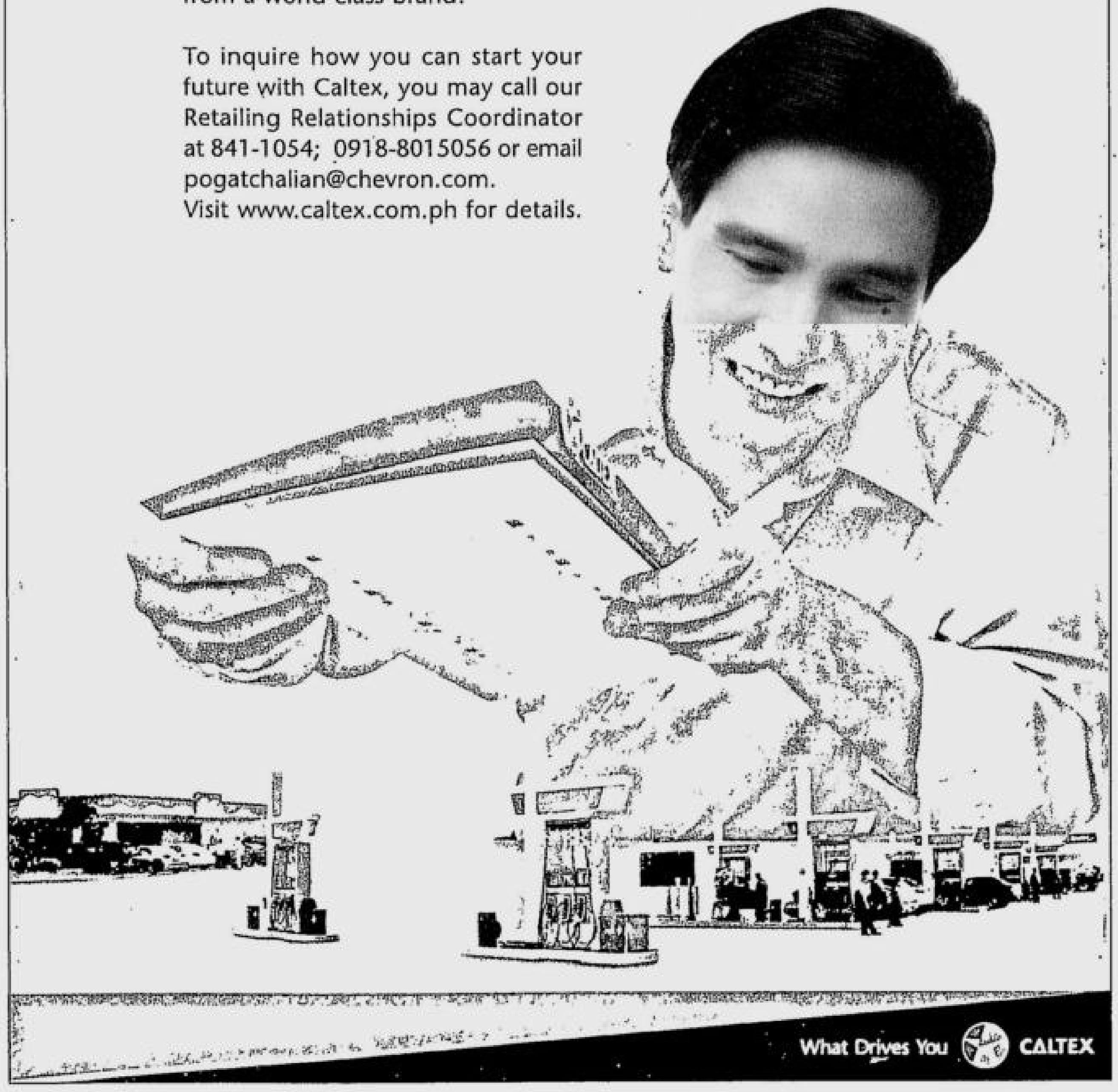

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Revisiting land reform

MAPping THE FUTURE
Augusto L. de Leon

AS CONGRESS RECONVENES next month, the extension of the Land Reform Law will surely be calendared. Knowing how our legislators decide on the basis of political expediency, they are most likely extend the life of the law without looking for ways to improve and make the law more effective as a developmental legislation.

After 20 years, it should only be reasonable to expect that before extending the effectivity of the law, a review be made not only in terms of the land area redistributed, but also as to how much land reform has truly improved the lives of the farmers.

As many now realize, our land reform law is basically flawed by our adoption of the Taiwan model—lock, stock, and barrel. Unfortunately, we have overlooked that the land reform law of Taiwan was a camouflage to make the confiscation and takeover by the Chiang Kai-Shek army more palatable to the international community. When the Kuomintang army retreated to Taiwan to escape the Communists, Taiwanese land was owned by the Taiwanese mainlanders. The cohorts of Chiang Kai-Shek, including land owners who retreated with him, had to be given the occupied territory. To make the forced confiscation more acceptable to the Americans, it was disguised as Land Reform.

What we have overlooked is that land ownership is possibly only one component to improve the lives of the tillers. The agricultural land of Taiwan has much more developed infrastructure made possible by years of investments in the agricultural land. The Japanese had much to do to make agricultural land productive, with good irrigation, drainage and farming practices and infrastructure to market farm output.

When we turned over the farm land covered by land reform to our farmers, the supporting infrastructure was far from comparable to the infrastructure of Taiwan agriculture. Unfortunately, the new land owners have no capital resource. They are incapable of making the necessary capital investments. They have neither the investments to maximize the potential of the land nor the working capital to operate the more developed agricultural land. As it is, government budget is hardly able to finance the working capital for planting and, to date, we are still struggling with the repairs of existing irrigation systems. For many farmers, there is still no irrigation available for a second, much less a third possible harvest a year. Farm-to-market roads are still very much work in progress.

The fact always held up to favor land reform is that farmers of Taiwan were able increase their income. What we overlook is that while actual land ownership may have been a factor, very little study was made as to how much the rapid increase of industrial production made it possible for most of the rural population to shift from earning a living in the farm to earning a living from working in factories. Farm population decreased quickly, forcing the remaining farmers to adopt mechanization, which was more efficient. Fewer people shared in the fruits of the land, enabling them to have a higher per capita income. The more holistic Taiwan economic program created a complementary cycle of factories producing goods and services while the agricultural sector was growing to be healthy buyers for said goods and services.

As a country with our own set of circumstances, now is an opportune time to reflect on the results of our legislation. Other than the present criteria of land size that has to be sliced up, here are three considerations that our legislators would do well to think over before the land reform law is extended.

First is the consideration of how much investment has been made or can be made by the land owner to increase the production output of the land.

The second is the amount of taxes that the land owner has been and could be paying if the land were not spliced out.

Third is the need to review and set policies regarding idle agricultural land resources.

The debate in the land reform extension agenda will be relevant if these three issu es are included.

Otherwise, the effective period of the law may just as well be allowed to lapse and the resources be redistributed among all the other departments and agencies of government so as to address the needs of the agrarian beneficiaries of CARL.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Principal Consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Sardines …

From page B2-1

pack the boxes into the trucks.

Balaoro says he pays them P35 for every box of sardines that they put on the truck.

Wennie Navas, 44, says he quit vending a year ago to become a lawlaw repacker during the peak season because he earns more.

Navas says the work starts at midnight when the fishermen deliver their catch to the buying station.

They would unload boxes of lawlaw, weighing 50 kilos each, which the fishermen initially packed at sea, then repack them in boxes containing 32 kilos of sardines each.

Balaoro says that during the peak season, the lawlaw industry generates jobs for at least 300 families in this coastal town.

His buying station alone hires at least 85 persons a day to get the work done.

He observes that the local economy has become more vibrant, with the growth trickling down to sari-sari stores and carenderias that provide support services to the fisherfolk, laborers and buying station staff.

The MAO reported that during peak season, some 15 tons of sardines are transported from the town to Metro Manila.

Mayor Roque Carranza says the unusual volume of lawlaw catch has likewise contributed significantly to the coffers of municipal local government unit due to the tariff of P10 for every box transported out of the town.

Carranza says P8 go to the municipal coffers while the barangay LGU, where the buying station is located, gets a P2-share from each box.

He says it may be unrealistic to expect the volume of lawlaw to stay where it is in the coming years.

But until the volume drops, the coastal town has every intention of making the most of the unexpected bounty. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Helping awaken RP's coffee industry

FARMERS are given training on cash crops which can be planted with coffee. Right photo shows Lumagbas

A MULTINATIONAL FIRM IS SPEARheading a campaign to revitalize the local coffee industry through grass roots initiatives designed to convince farmers to plant coffee.

According to Joel Lumagbas, head of Nestlé Philippines Inc.'s agricultural services department, these initiatives have done much to change the landscape for coffee farmers, creating much more favorable conditions for coffee farmers today than in decades past.

"Unlike before, coffee farmers now have direct access to Nescafe, assuring them that their coffee harvest will fetch the best possible price, whether it's just one sack or a truckload," says Lumagbas.

Since the late 90s, Nescafe, Nestle's flagship coffee brand, has instituted a buying policy wherein coffee farmers are guaranteed sale of their crops at prices based on the prevailing market price and Nescafe's coffee grading system. Buying stations located throughout the country have been set up to buy green coffee beans directly from the farmers, eliminating middlemen from the transaction and allowing farmers to earn more from their crops. Today, Nescafe is the single largest coffee buyer in the Philippines, guaranteeing that coffee farmers receive the full fruits of their labor.

But perhaps the largest challenge facing the coffee industry at the moment is how to convince farmers to take the first steps in planting coffee. Coffee plants need two years to mature before yielding their first harvest. But even this does not faze Lumagbas, who points out that thanks to the development of the Coffee Based Sustainable Farming System (CBSFS), in line with Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAIN) at Nestle, farmers now have a means of planting cash crops in between coffee trees. The Nestlé Philippines Inc. Agricultural Services Department in Tagum City, Davao del Norte is one of a handful of locations where farmers can receive comprehensive training on CBSFS.

With the CBSFS, farmers are given step-by-step training on cash crops which can be planted along with coffee to supplement their income in the interim as well as provide additional revenues once the coffee plants mature. The CBSFS frees farmers from relying purely on coffee as a source of income and also gives them the freedom to keep coffee crops so that it can be sold at an optimum price.

To help farmers increase their yield and manage their crops, Nescafe established in 1994 the Nestlé Experimental and Demonstration Farm (NEDF) also located in Tagum City. The NEDF serves as a laboratory for new and improved farming methods, a provider of planting materials such as seedling and cuttings, and a training ground for coffee farmers who wish to maximize their yield.

Through the NEDF, Lumagbas hopes coffee farmers will learn to change with times and become competitive on the world market once more. At one point, the Philippines ranked third, next only to Brazil and Columbia in terms of coffee production. But in order to reclaim our place as a coffee producer in the world commodities market, there is still much that has to be done.

To illustrate the need for initiatives and programs like the NEDF, he cites farmers in Lipa, the historical center of coffee growing in the Philippines, who are reluctant to part with old farming methods like single stem cultivation despite irrefutable data that show the quality of the coffee is in no way affected by the multi-stem method which can quadruple the yield of a plant. It explains why despite its long association with coffee, Batangas has since been overtaken by several provinces in Luzon in terms of coffee production.

In terms of quality, Lumagbas is quick to point out that soil and weather conditions through many parts of the Philippines are ideal for planting Robusta coffee beans which are generally acknowledged to be of world class quality.

Eventually, Lumagbas hopes even more farmers will come to realize that with proper farm management and improved farming techniques, there's money to be made through planting coffee. He is optimistic that renewed interest in agriculture will attract a new generation of entrepreneurial farmers eager to capitalize on inroads made in coffee farming methods developed over the past decade.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, July 17, 2006

Philippine Idol
Subaybayan: Kuwento ng mga naghahangad maging 1st Philippine Idol.
The phenomenon begins. July 30, Sunday, 8 PM.
PHILIPPINE IDOL NA!
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	V League				Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Toloo TV			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	A Love To Kill	Bandila	OK Fine! Whatever		
AXN		Warriors Of Heaven And Earth					Boarding Pass (Season 4)	Amazon		Andromeda (Season V)		The Ultimate Fighter		Numb3rs (Season 2)		Lost (Season II)		House	
Cartoon Network	Pixie And Dixie	All New Popeye Show	I am Weasel	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Codename: Kids Next Door Xiaolin Showdown	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Simpsons	Samurai Jack	PokeMon	Dico	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons	Teen Titans	Justice League	The Batman	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock
Cinema One		Inday Inday sa Balitaw				Calvento Files				Jamias Barako Ng Maynila				Ubos Na Ang Luha Ko				Gatas Sa Dibdib Ng Kaaway	
Cinemax	Blue Demon (2:40 PM)			Marnie (4:15 PM)					Rules Of Obsession			Battlestar Galactica Mission 2			Mystic River (9:25 PM)				Blue Demon (11:40 PM)
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Main Sail	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones	Prison Break	Cold Case	
Discovery Channel				Discovery Encore		Zero Hour		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Wild Discovery		Life Unlimited		End Day		I Shouldn't Be Alive		On The Run	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouseworks	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						Tour De France 2006	Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Watersports Programming Hot Water		Atlantic Coast Conf. Basketball: N. Carolina Vs Maryland		Germany Tonight		Sportscenter Asia	LPGA Golf Jamie Farr Owens Coming 4th rd.				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Friends 10	Beach Girls		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		America's Next Top Model 4		ET Weekend	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	The Biggest Loser		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle Of Common Sense II	Threshold Of Hope		Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr Benedict Groeschel		Daily Mass		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	Good Or Evil- Who Decides?	The Gospel Of John	Freedom & Authority	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		I Luv NY (8:50 PM)	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Child Of Our Time (3:15 PM)		The Sandy Bottom Orchestra				McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Dinotopia		Judging Amy		The Crooked E: The Unshredded Truth About Enron			Judging Amy (11:45 PM)
HBO			The Stepsister (3:45 PM)			I'll Be There (5:15 PM)				Batman & Robin				Spanglish				White Water Summer	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Gamburagar	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Gosaurer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Japan Video Topics/ Aims		Global Family Series		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Aims	Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV		The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Embellish This	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	El Extra: High Price Of Fame		NY Fashion Week	Martha		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	Good Finds	Style Star
MTV Philippines		Wildboyz	8th & Ocean	MTV Hits	MTV Hits					Get Spotted	MTV Off Beaten Track #101	TRL		Wildboyz	8th & Ocean	MTV Hits	Handpicked: Kamikaze	MTV Hits	Brand New
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mobile MYX Top Picks		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Naked Science		The Living Edens		Top 5 - Amazing Moments	Top 5 - Amazing Moments	WOW! Global Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Naked Science: Surviving Nature's Fury		The Living Edens: Kamchatka	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Atbp.			Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Net 25	INC Chronicles	Convergence	Auto Motor Sport	The Planet	Tomorrow Today	Ang Pagbubunyag		News Bud (Live)		Openline (Live)	Kapatid Sa Hanapbuhay	INC Chronicles E	INC Chronicles F	Ang Tamang Daan		World Report	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	DWTV Journal News	Quadriga
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob Squarepants/ Right On Top	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron, My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks! All Grown Up		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Enfanto Ang Bilas Ko NBEye				Lakbay				Sekreta Ini				Radyo				Karan Sa Hi-way
Qtv		Shaman King	Outlaw Star	Galaxy Angel	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Phoenix	Irene	Fireworks	Damo	Project 11	H3O Hahaha...Over!		News On Q	Liga Ng Kababaihan		Irene
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Kapatid Show	RPN Aksyon News		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	Movie Monday					Newswatch Now	Go Negosyo		Cerge For Truth
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						WNBA '06: New York Liberty Vs Phoenix Mercury				Sagupaan		Boxing Pacquiao vs Velasquez				Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	2006 Uber Cup QFinals	
Sports Plus						Ultimate Fighting C'ship Bouts				Party Poker.com World Open '05				World Game		John Deere Classic Final			
Star Movies				The First Power (4:05 PM)			Lupa Lupa (5:45 PM)				Confessions of a Sociopathic Social Climber			Armageddon					Moscow Heat
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids	Still Standing	Yes Dear	Frasier/ Becker (Series 5)	Dance Fever		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Dragon Booster	6Teen	Blog	Wazzup Wazzup	High School Reunion 2		Lost (8:20 PM)	Alias (9:10 PM)		News Central	America's Next Top Model		Travel Time

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Credit cards: Part of life

THE CREDIT CARD'S ABILITY TO STRETCH your purchasing power by providing extra liquidity has also enabled you to acquire bigger purchases like home appliances

This same convenience has extended to basic household expenses such as electric and telephone bills.

Using credit cards is no longer charge-and-pay-afterwards kind of service. Credit cards are now packed with features tailor fit to the needs of every consumer—reward points that entitle you free items or gifts and discounts at partner establishments.

Rolando Tanchanco, president of the Credit Card Association of the Philippines (CCAP), observes: "Majority of credit card products now integrate a rewards program as one way to ensure customer loyalty. And as industry competition heightens, the customer wins with the rewards programs getting more and more generous." As credit card issuers busy themselves coming up with new features to make their rewards packages more appealing, customers are given more choices, better deals and lower interest rates.

"Apart from rewards programs, credit card companies are also leveraging on their businesses to get more value deals for the customer. This is why you are seeing installment payment options at more stores—some even offering zero percent. And the best news, we believe it can only get better for the customer as card companies fight for wallet share," he adds.

It is therefore no surprise that given the situation of today's consumer, the credit card is no longer a luxury but a necessity, thanks to the convenience, security and financial flexibility this powerful bit of plastic provides. And so here's to the credit card, a one-of-a-kind item that definitely deserves to be designated as a basic need of life.

Bank offers 5% interest

RECENTLY LAUNCHED GE MONEY BANK announced a checking account that offers a 5-percent interest rate for three months. The Flex Checking Account offers this high rate for consumers who open from June 20 to Sept. 30, 2006, and maintain a P50,000 average daily balance (ADB) for three months. The account also provides consumers with the convenience of access to funds via ATM and checkbook.

GE Money Bank opened 30 branches on June 19, 2006 in various locations in the Philippines. Identifying a strong growth opportunity in the country, GE Money Bank aims to provide a "simply better banking" experience to Filipino consumers through speed, flexibility, trustworthiness, and personalized service.

GE Money Bank holds a solid track record in Asia and other emerging markets, from Turkey to Thailand. It currently serves more than 118 million customers in 47 countries worldwide. Now, GE Money brings to the Philippines this global expertise in risk management, analytics and business management practices for the benefit of the Filipino consumers, assuring them of a banking partner they can grow with.

In the Philippines, GE Money Bank operates in 30 locations. For more information call 7218000, or visit www.gemoneybank.com.ph

Evolution of Pinoy piggy banks

THE "PINOY" way of saving then was with empty tin cans where coins were put until these were full. Others used the "kawayan" and other creative representations of a coin bank.

HOW DID THE CONCEPT OF THE "piggy bank" evolve into the culture of Pinoys?

Saving, for Filipinos, started even in the old times. It is a heritage passed on by our ancestors further developed by the blend of Hispanic and other Asian cultures that inhabited the country.

The Filipinos are naturally "matipid," so to speak. There is an inherent Filipino characteristic of thriftiness that even in the midst of scarcity, a small amount of savings is a significant investment for the future.

The Pinoy way of saving then was done by the use of old and empty tin cans where Pinoys dropped in their coins regularly until it was full. Others used the "kawayan" and other creative representations of a coin bank.

Being of largely agricultural orientation, many Filipino families also used to do backyard farming. This included small-scale hog and poultry raising where food for these animals largely came from leftovers. Feeding expenses was relatively minimal and in due time, fattened and fully grown hogs and poultry were sold to market dealers and earnings were enjoyed.

Because of this traditional community trade, the concept of saving by raising hogs evolved into the development of "piggy banks" as one of the creative representation of a coin bank. These are pig-shaped and designed coin banks which Filipino families started using and eventually gained much popularity and acceptance. Soon, it has become part of the Filipino culture.

Nowadays, modern coin banks come in all forms and sizes. But the tradition and authentic Filipino saving model represented by the "piggy bank" can never be outshined.

Believing in this genuinely Filipino way of saving, The Real Bank, a fast-growing thrift bank that initiated and led a savings advocacy campaign among the children in 2004 now popularly called "Bata... Bata... Mag-impok at Magsinop" in partnership with the Department of Education, continues to promote the use of these "piggy banks."

Children, aged 12 years and below, who open a Real Kiddie Savers' Club (RKSC) account, are each given their own RKSC piggy bank upon reaching P500 monthly ADB. They are encouraged to save their money in these piggy banks and bring the same back to the bank when they are filled up. After depositing said money, the piggy banks are returned to the children for yet another period of saving which turned out to be a creative way of developing the habit of saving in them.

Truly, inculcating the value of saving among the children even at their young age and imbibing in them the Filipino culture and tradition of using the piggy bank is a worthy endeavor. Doing this will surely help our youth become the country's future nation builders.

'Pink' direct selling...

From page B2-4

the "obsolescence in color is faster than skin care," he says.

Mary Kay began operations in the Philippines in May 2000 by Filipino-American sales agents from the US. It met some problems initially but was able to stabilize operations and create a good sales network.

Starting a Mary Kay independent business costs P1,975 for a starter kit and educational materials. Mary Kay is known for the pink color—it awards its top sales people the use of pink cars. In the Philippines these are pink Honda cars; in the US it's a pink Cadillac or even a pink Pontiac depending on the sales levels achieved by the beauty consultant.

Mercado says they are preparing a pink Pajero for their top sales agent in the Philippines.

Software firm sets up loan package for SMEs

STREAMLINING ITS OWN accounting system through the support of a financial software distribution, the 70,000-strong Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Picpa) linked up with local Quickbooks distributor e-Methods for Business Management Inc. (e-MBM) for its customized accounting requirements.

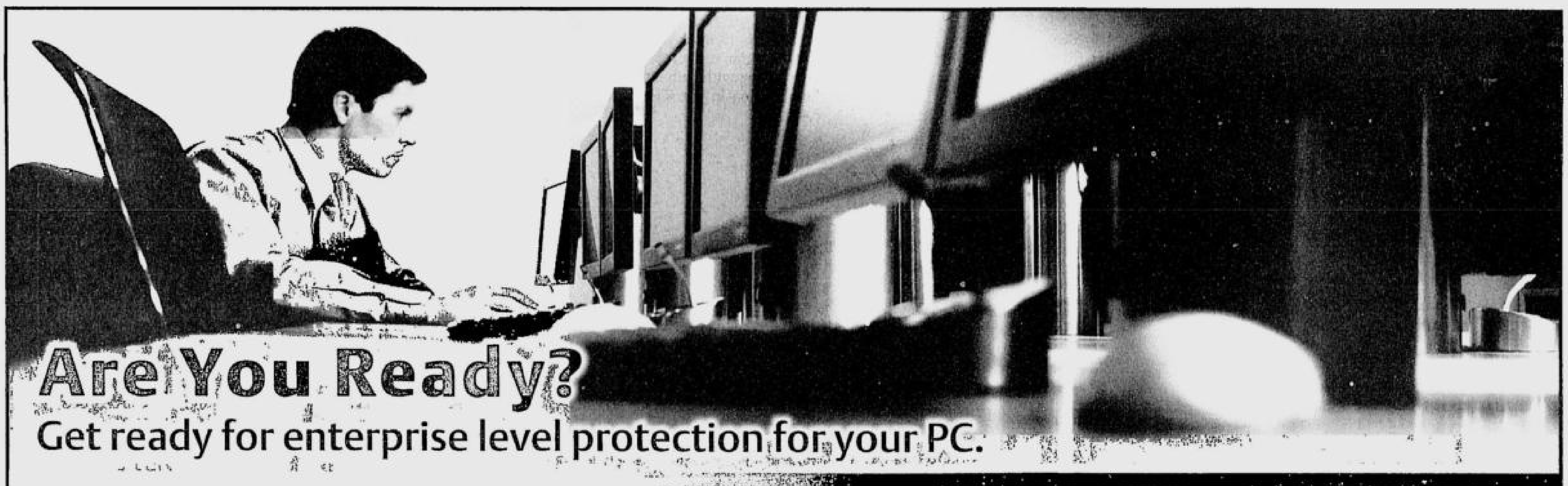
Picpa president David L. Balangue signed a three-year agreement with e-MBM chairman and CEO Garth Noel Tolentino allowing e-MBM to provide QuickBooks products, staff training, technical support and provisions for updates.

The accredited professional organization of CPAs received 10 user licenses of QuickBooks.

Developed by Intuit, the financial software products, QuickBooks targets financial professionals and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

e-MBM recently arranged financial assistance package that SMEs can avail from Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SBGFC) in developing their systems. Through e-MBM, a qualified entrepreneur can borrow up to P200,000 from SBGFC for use in office productivity solutions.

SMEs account for 99 percent of over 800,000 existing enterprises in the country today based on figures from the National Statistics Office. Studies revealed that SMEs, despite their lack of financial resources, want to keep up with technology.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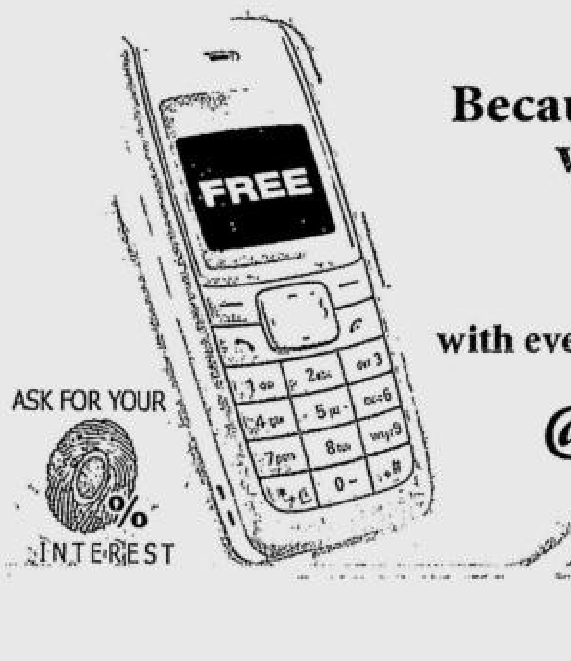

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'Pink' direct selling firm finds hit in white line

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

MERCADO

HE SAYS NOBODY BELIEVES him but Bernard Y. Mercado, general manager of Mary Kay (Philippines) Inc., tells people anyway: sales of the direct selling cosmetics firm are shooting up.

This despite the fact that industry growth has just been "stable," according to the Direct Selling Association of the Philippines.

Mercado, who has worked with several other direct selling firms, says sales during the first half of the year rose 70 percent compared with the previous year's first six months; and sales from 2004 to 2005 grew by 61 percent.

The firm's sales target for this year is P400 million. Bulk of these sales usually come in the last quarter. While this amount may be small compared with sales of other direct selling firms (at Avon for example, one top director has annual sales of over P200 million), the growth posted by the firm is worth talking about.

How did Mary Kay, the Texas-based firm, started by Mary Kay Ash when she was already in her 40s, defy the local trend?

Mercado says via a two-pronged approach. The firm launched a whitening product line and made the incentives program for its sales agents more attractive by lowering the targets.

Last March, Mary Kay launched its PureWhite system, a skin-brightening line that became a hit in Asia and the Philippines.

Mercado admits the Philippines, and the rest of Asia for that matter, is still a huge market for whitening products—yes, even China, where most women are already fair-skinned.

Lowering the sales targets for its agents was a strategic move that created a psychological boost to its sales agents.

Mercado explains that by having easier targets, this resulted in "small wins first" that later inspired the sales agents to work harder to sell more.

During the opening of the Mary Kay plant in China for example, many qualified for the trip which was an incentive because of lower sales requirements.

Mary Kay products are priced higher than most of their competitors. The target market is generally the working women. As such the sales agents the firm attracts are mostly college graduates with half of its 30,000 "independent beauty consultants" as they call their sales agents, doing Mary Kay on the side only.

Mercado says 60 percent of their sales come from their skin care products. The firm is geared more toward skin products than color (eye shadow, lipstick) as

PINK/B2-3

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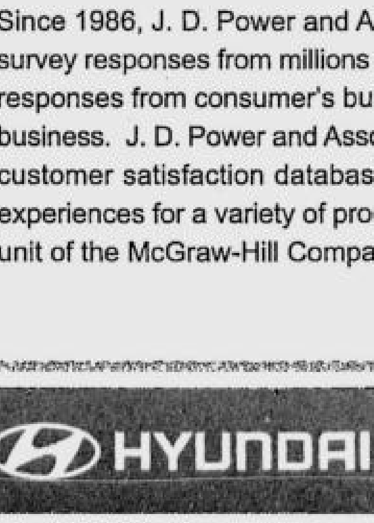

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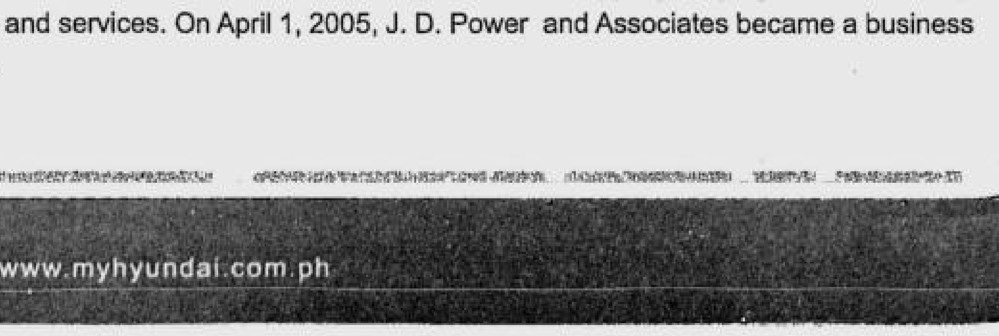

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Hyundai Azera Receives J.D. Power And Associates' APEAL Award

The all-new 2006 Hyundai Azera earned distinction from J.D. Power and Associates today as the most appealing Large Car in the 2006 Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study. In addition, the Hyundai Tiburon (Coupe) ranked second in the Compact Sporty Car segment.

"In its first year of production, the Azera has earned recognition for high quality, impressive safety features and, now, consumer appeal," said Mark Barnes, vice president, National Sales, Hyundai Motor America. "In addition, the Tiburon sporty coupe continues to impress owners with its dynamic styling, performance and safety, adding depth and diversity to our product portfolio."

The Azera trophy case has grown recently with a number of honors and awards. It captured the AutoPacific 2006 Vehicle Satisfaction Award (VSA) for the Large Car category. Forbes.com named the Azera the Best Luxurious Car for a Non-luxury Price in its 2006 "Best Cars for the Bucks" list. J.D. Power and Associates' Initial Quality Study (IQS) ranked Azera second in the Large Car segment. Finally, the 2006 Azera earned the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) top crash test ratings for frontal offset impacts, aided by unsurpassed standard safety equipment like Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Anti-lock Brakes (ABS) and eight airbags.

The Tiburon also scored high marks in the 2006 J.D. Power and Associates Initial Quality Study, ranking second in the Compact Sporty Car segment.

The annual APEAL Study measures owner delight with the design, content, layout and performance of their new vehicles. The study is based on responses from more than 63,000 purchasers and lessees of new 2006 model-year cars and trucks who were surveyed after the first 90 days of ownership.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is an ISO 9001-registered global marketing information services firm operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, consulting, training and customer satisfaction. The firm's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumer annually. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of the McGraw-Hill Companies. J.D. Power and Associates can be accessed through the World Wide Web at www.jdpower.com.

ADVT.

Leader of innovations in e-banking

BancNet promises more convenience to clients

By Raquel P. Gomez

BancNet, the leading ATM network in the Philippines, is set on maintaining its leadership in the forefront of innovations and pioneering services in electronic banking.

BancNet's chairman Angelito Villanueva said Bancnet's 16 years of existence saw the transformation of the consortium from a primary ATM switch in the country into a multi-bank, multi-channel payments gateway in the Philippines.

"There's so much to be done," said Villanueva with regard to BancNet's role in an electronic era that keeps influencing change in the banking industry. "The world of e-commerce is just beginning. And our mission statement defines the kind of direction we would like to pursue, to become the primary provider of settlements via electronic channels in an era of e-commerce."

The largest ATM consortium that has 29 banks under its wing has gone beyond the initial concept of ATM banking and has embraced and is currently pursuing a range of electronic facilities spawned by new technologies in e-commerce.

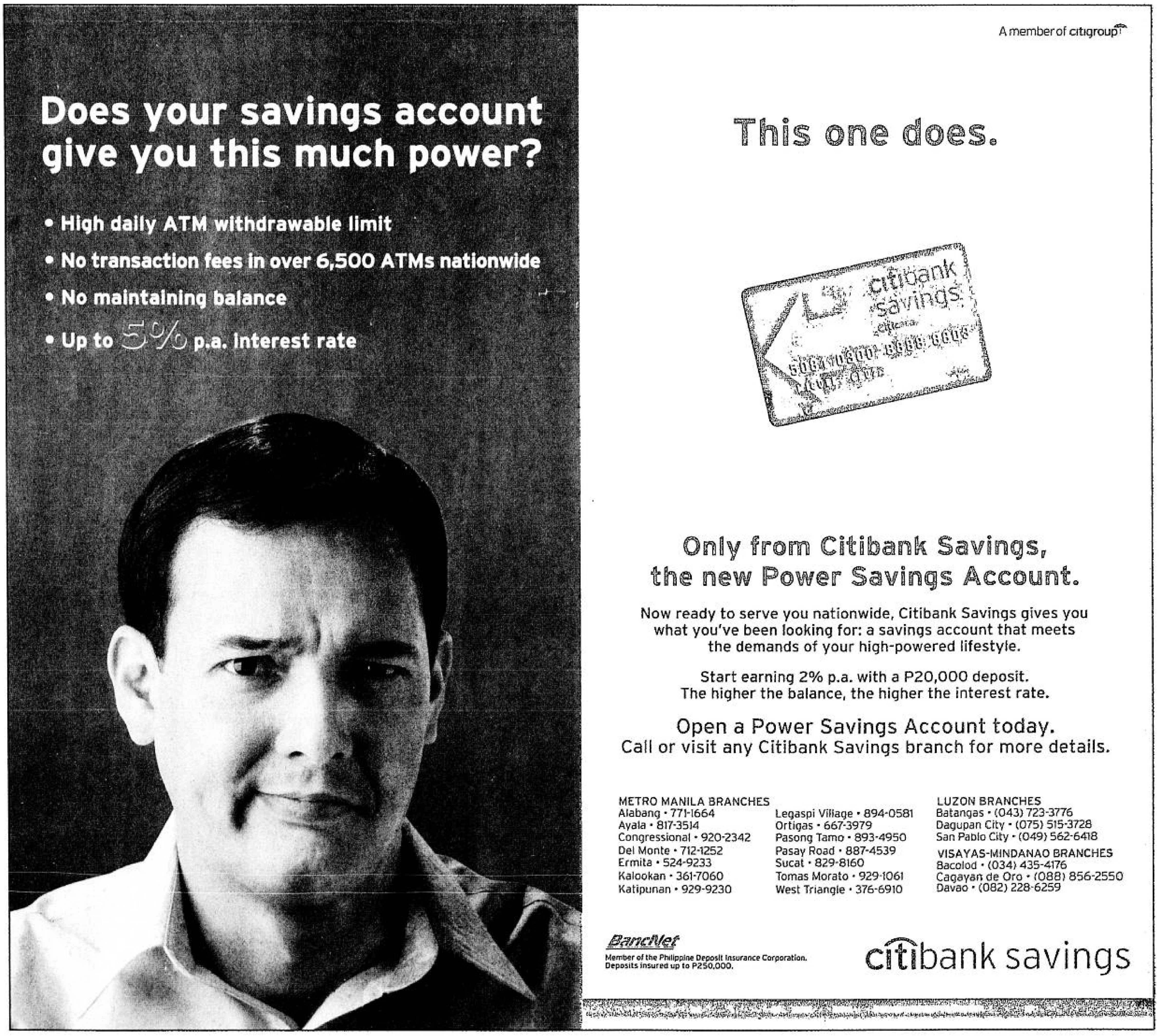
With convenience of clients in mind, BancNet introduced a whole range of banking services such as balance inquiry, electronic fund transfer, bills payment system that extended to insurance, loans, and taxes, and use of the ATM card as a debit card through use of the ATM kiosks and outlets, POS terminals, Internet, and mobile phone 24 hours a day.

BancNet is making headway into the international realm with its agreement with China Union Pay, allowing Chinese visitors who hold credit or debit cards issued by the Chinese group to use

INNOVATIONS/ B3-3

MALL OF ASIA
SM

THE BANCNET Board of Directors in front of SM Mall of Asia whose flagship shops SM Department Store and SM Hypermart are accredited BancNet Point-of-Sale (POS) merchants where cardholders can pay using their BancNet member-bank ATM cards. Shown are (from left) George Castro of Philtrust Bank, Jose Maria Valdes of Export Bank, Joven Hernandez of Security Bank, Robert Tan of PBCom, Peter Yap of Allied Bank, Robert Blas of Citibank, Marilyn Suarez of Merchants Bank, Ernesto Pinpin of RCBC, Corp. Secretary Juan Coreces, Vice Chairman Ricardo Chua of China Bank, President Francisco Caparros, Jr. of Asia United Bank, Chairman Angelito Villanueva of Metrobank, Anthony Robles of Chinatrust Bank, and Abigail del Rosario of Standard Chartered Bank.



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EDI-SSSNET FACILITY

Paying SSS premiums has never been so fast, convenient

With this system, all the employer would do is to fund its account with a BancNet-member bank, submit the necessary forms to the SSS then transact online through the website to settle the payments. The payments are automatically deducted from the employer's BancNet bank account

By Joel V. Nigos

MARIVIC PASCUA WORKS AS a payroll assistant of Phoenix Maritime Corp, a company engaged in recruiting, training and deployment of seafarers to ocean-going vessels. As payroll assistant, she handles the payroll of the seafarers as well as its other employees. She also takes care of remitting the company's SSS contributions for their personnel.

She remembers when she used to go to the SSS office to submit the latest data of Phoenix Maritime's employees, then go back again to remit the contributions.

She used to fall in line at the pension fund's nearest office to remit their payments. She did this monthly.

Marilyn Abella, personnel assistant of the Firm Builders Group of Companies, was on the same boat. As personnel assistant, she also handles their employees' salaries and remittance of their SSS contributions.

Handling the SSS payments, especially when they were using the old manual system, gave them a host of problems.

"Our premium contributions were usually posted every quarter," shares Marivic. "When there were discrepancies in the employees' data we submitted, we were also not immediately informed."

And since they usually get feedback from the SSS much later, this created other problems especially when one of their employees avails himself of a loan from the SSS. Errors or discrepancies in the employees' data could result to unposted premium payments. With no latest contributions, an SSS member cannot avail himself or herself of a loan or claim a benefit from the pension fund.

Manual process

Indeed, for Marivic and Marilyn the old manual process was truly taxing.

Since they need to remit SSS premiums every month, they would also go to the SSS office monthly.

"We were usually greeted with long lines at SSS," describes Marivic. "Falling in long lines could also mean unproductive times for me and at times, headaches."

The hassles did not end there.

BancNet
Electronic
P ents Facility

BANCNET and SSS recently entered into two major agreements: 1) SSS electronic payment system allowing self employed BancNet cardholders to pay their SSS contributions using the BancNet ATM; 2) SSS Loan Repayments facility wherein employers can pay the loan amortizations of their employees through the BancNet system. Shaking hands are BancNet chair Angelito Villanueva and SSS President and CEO Corazon dela Paz.

"If there are discrepancies in the employees' information we submitted with the SSS records, the pension fund would not post the payments. Often, this could run up to months until the data are corrected," says Estela Adolfo, VP for treasury of Firm Builders.

"And unless one of our employees or the SSS informs us that there are discrepancies in the data we submitted or there are unposted premium payments, we wouldn't know," Adolfo adds.

Unposted premium payments could create further problems.

SSS requires its members to have at least six latest monthly contributions to qualify for a salary loan or other benefit claim from the pension fund. Without the required latest contributions, the loan application or the benefit claim would be declined.

"Only after the member's data is updated and the contributions posted can the member reapply for a loan or claim a benefit. This takes time," says Adolfo.

But for Marivic and Marilyn, the old SSS manual system is a thing of the past.

They are now using the new EDI-SSSNet facility which can be accessed through the BancNet website. With this system, all the employer would do is to fund its account with a BancNet-member bank, submit the necessary forms to the SSS then transact online through the website to settle the payments. The payments are automatically deducted from the employer's Bancnet bank account.

Transacting through EDI-SSSNet also has other advantages.

"If there are discrepancies in the data I have inputted online, the SSS would immediately inform me about the errors, usually in two to three days," says Marilyn.

With the fast feedback, the data then are immediately corrected. That means no delayed posting of contributions, thus, no further hassles in availing of SSS loans or benefits.

"We also don't need to go to the SSS office to pay the premiums. We can settle our payments at the convenience of our office, minus the long lines and the other hassles that come with it," she emphasizes.

Electronic data interchange

The electronic premium payments and loan repayments are made possible by electronic data interchange created and designed exclusively by BancNet for the use of the SSS. Through this facility, employers are able to pay their employees' premiums and loan repayments online. Employees' records are also immediately updated when the employer transacts online since the data are directly transmitted to SSS.

Available currently to employers, this service will be expanded to cover also those self-employed or individually paying members. Thus, account holders of BancNet-member banks will be able to pay their premiums online. The same will be used by self-employed or individually paying members for their loan payments when they avail themselves of loans from SSS.

The EDI-SSSNet is the fastest way of transmitting data because as soon as the data is transmitted the member's file is already updated.

"Convenience, efficiency, fast feedback, no long lines are just some of the advantages of transacting online through this BancNet facility," says Marilyn. "With the fast feedback, we're also able to get rid of problems caused by data errors or unposted premium contributions," Marivic concurs.

Phoenix Maritime has been using the BancNet facility since 2001. Firm Builders, meanwhile, began transacting online in 2004.

Phoenix Maritime Corp is a company duly licensed and authorized by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to engage in the business of manning ocean-going vessels, recruitment of shipboard personnel and provide ship support services.

Its services include crew management, crew training, supply of safety and personnel gears, and other support services which the vessels may require.

Established in April 1995 as Fil-Harvest Marine Inc, the company changed its name to the present PMC in 1998. From its founding, its operations have since grown to manning 21 vessels and a pool of more than 700 qualified and competent officers and crew. The 21 vessels include both panamax and handy size bulk carriers, container vessels and general cargo. It services all routes around the world.

The Firm Builders Group of Companies, on the other hand, is a real estate developer engaged in the development of mass housing subdivisions.

Under the Group are four separate companies—Firm Builders Realty Development Corp, Tierra Minerva Properties Development Corp, Guimaras Realty Inc and Southern Flagship Realty Inc. FBRDC is its flagship company.

The Group has built a total of 24 projects nationwide developing more than 256 hectares of land comprising almost 11,000 housing units. The total value of housing loans FBGC has processed so far amounts to P2.59 billion.

FBGC also prides itself as one of the few players in the housing industry with an established presence nationwide. Its projects span the northern and southern regions of the country—from Cagayan Valley to Zamboanga.

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o Intra/Inter-bank Fund Transfers - transfer funds from your account to another deposit account in the same or different BancNet member bank through ATM or Internet.
o PSC e-Pass Reload
o Prepaid card reload
o Checkbook Request

2. Access BancNet Online at www.bancnetonline.com, the country's first multi-bank, multi-channel payment gateway facility. Except for cash withdrawal, BancNet Online allows you to do ATM transactions and more over the Internet such as:

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o Bills Payment
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o PSC e-Pass Reload
o Prepaid Card reload
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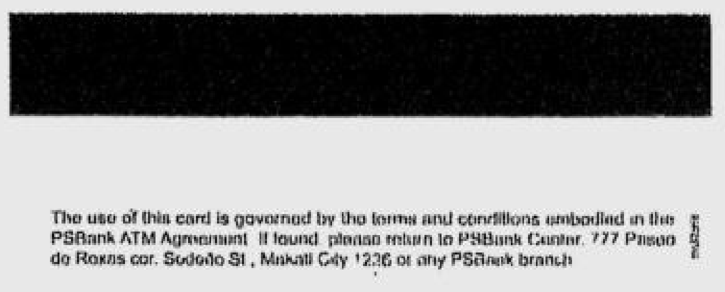

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BancNet

Leader of innovations

From page B3-1

BancNet's facilities such as making payment through POS terminals and withdrawing cash from BancNet's ATMs in the Philippines. China Union Pay is now the largest card network in China with 152 affiliated banks and 815 million cardholders.

Villanueva said in the future, Filipino BancNet cardholders will be able to withdraw cash from CUP's facilities anywhere in the world. A memorandum of agreement with the Department of Tourism is in the works to promote the use of the CUP card in BancNet's facilities among Chinese visitors in the country. "Through DOT consulates in China, BancNet will be promoted, informing the potential Chinese tourists of the use of BancNet's facilities through CUP."

BancNet started operations on July 17, 1990 with eight founding banks. The consortium operates like a cooperative and profit is secondary to its mission of serving members and cardholders, according to Villanueva.

BancNet eventually offered a bills payment system when the member banks realized that cardholders could do so much with their ATM card other than balance inquiry and cash withdrawal.

BancNet introduced its Point-of-Sale facility, allowing cardholders to use their ATM card to buy from groceries, department stores, specialty shops, drugstores and even gas stations with the amount of purchase automatically debited from their deposit account.

BancNet pioneered the Inter-Bank Fund Transfer Facility (IBFT) that allows cardholders to move or transfer funds across different member banks belonging to the consortium.

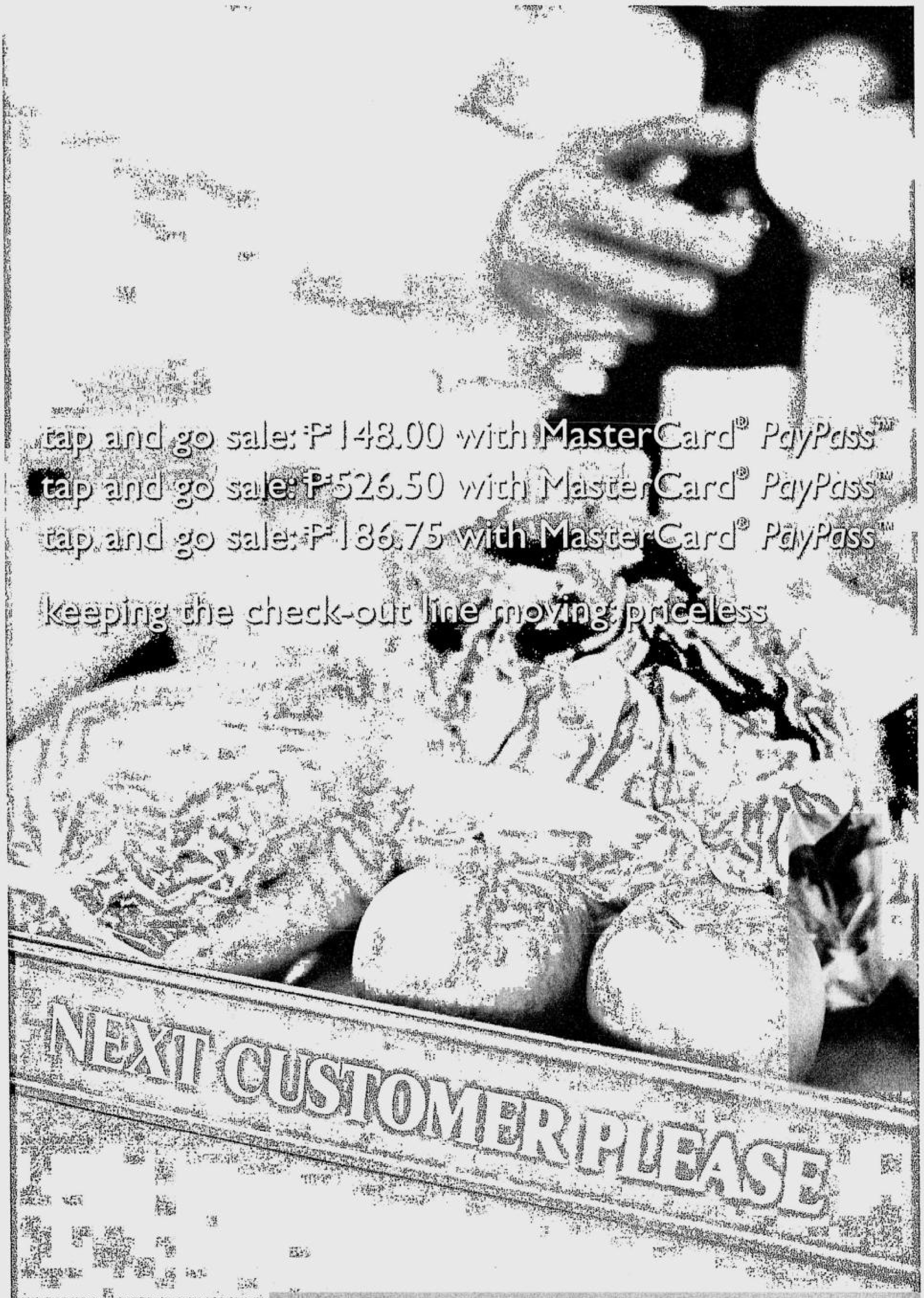
"At one point in time, we were an Internet Service Provider," said Villanueva. "But because of the proliferation of so many ISPs, we thought it best to leave it to the other parties."

BancNet saw the potential of electronic data interchange and introduced to companies the facilitation of remittance of their employees' SSS contributions. BancNet president Francisco M. Caparros Jr said BancNet's EDI facility will be expanded to allow self-employed individuals to remit their SSS contributions via the ATM. Caparros added, aside from monthly contributions, SSS loans will soon be paid through BancNet.

BancNet also introduced Tax Direct that allows for tax payments to be electronically transferred to the Bureau of Internal Revenue in a matter of seconds. Caparros said BancNet is currently having negotiations with Philhealth and Pag-Ibig to adopt the EDI facility.

The biggest project BancNet embarked upon was the multi-channel gateway or BancNet Online. Cardholders can do a host of banking services via the Internet. With the explosion of mobile phone technology, BancNet introduced mobile banking by running on the same platform as its Internet Banking facility.

As to BancNet's focus on the security of its systems against all types of fraud in the Internet or similar electronic platforms, Villanueva said the consortium is investing heavily in technology. Every year, BancNet's systems are assessed by experts from abroad and the security systems are constantly upgraded.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BancNet

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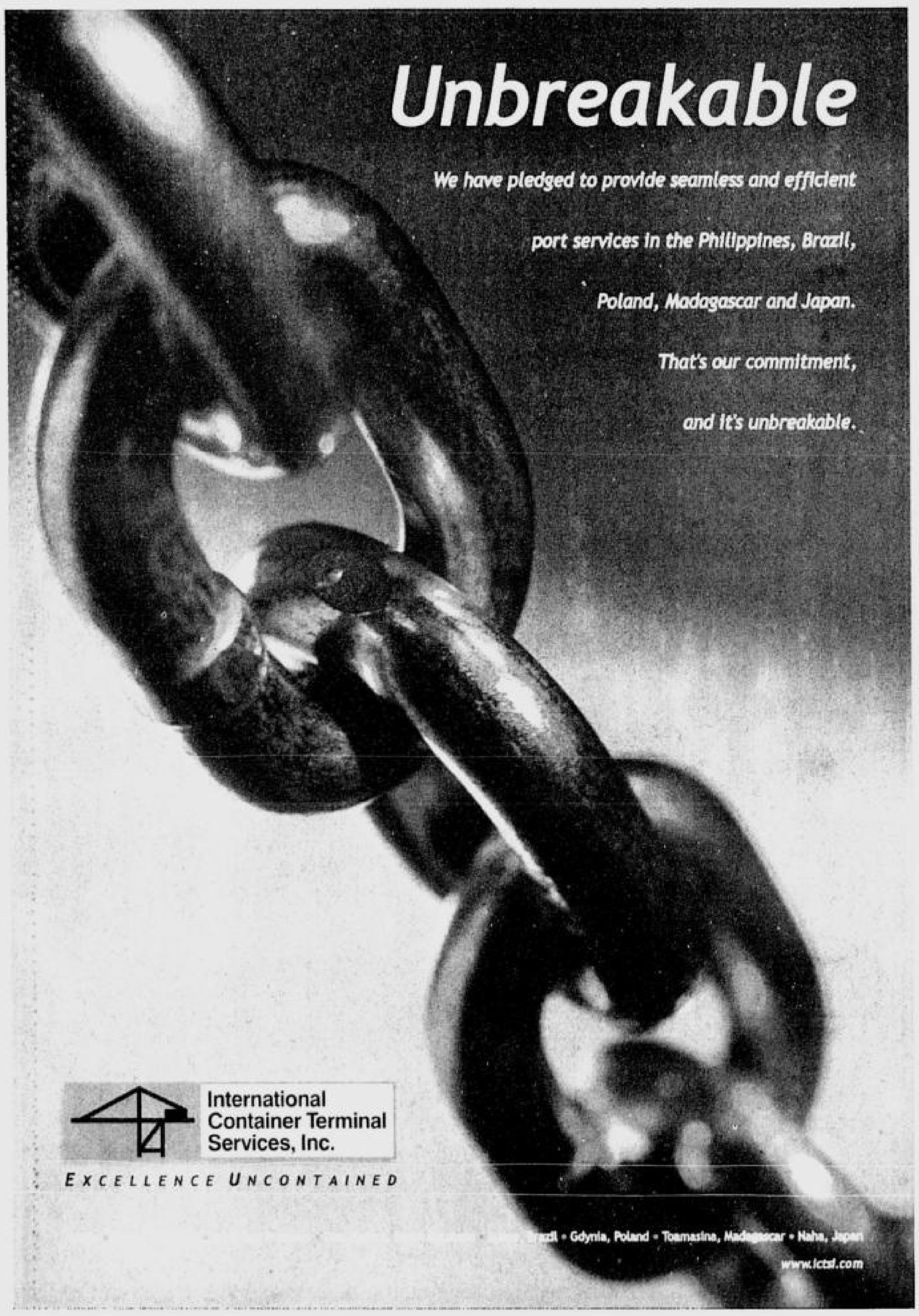
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BANCNET and the Department of Tourism forged an agreement to promote tourism through electronic channels. From left, DOT Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque Jr, BancNet chair Angelito Villanueva, DOT Secretary Ace Durano, BancNet president Francisco Caparros Jr.

Security Tips for the Web

We want your online experience to be pleasant and enjoyable. Banking online can be convenient and secure–if you take a few simple precautions.

Transact Only through Secured Websites:

- Do business only with companies you know and trust. Make sure that you carefully review the privacy and security statements of the web sites on which you transact business.
- Beware of phony "look alike" websites, which are designed to trick consumers and collect their personal information. If you suspect a website that is not what it purports to be, leave the site. Do not follow any of the instructions it may present to you.
- To visit the BancNet website, type the URL (Universal Resource Locator) directly onto your browser or use your personal bookmark. For Bancnet—the URL is www.bancnetonline.com.
- All BancNet websites asking for sensitive information such as card number and PIN number will have valid security certificates. You can check the security certificates by looking for the yellow padlock symbol on the lower right of the status bar of your Internet Browser; if the lock is closed, this signifies that the website is encrypted to protect you when you enter sensitive information. This symbol may only be present when the website is requesting you for your information. Unfortunately, even the lock icon can be faked. For further safety, double-click on the lock icon to display a security certificate information page of the site confirming the validity of the certificate and verify the website source which should be www.bancnetonline.com. If any of these tests fail, please contact our BancNet Helpdesk at +63 (2) 894-5952.
- Avoid public computer terminals such as those in cyber-cafes when accessing your bank account information. If you do use these public terminals, make sure to clear the memory cache and transaction history before closing the Internet browser to remove any remaining information and avoid incidents of the stored information being retrieved by unscrupulous parties.

Protect your Passwords and Account Information

- Ensure that no one is watching you while you key in your PIN or any other sensitive information.
- Keep your PIN confidential and keep it separate from your card information. Your PIN should be memorized and not recorded anywhere.
- Never lend your card to anyone or accept advice from strangers while you are using it.
- If you need to use a public computer, make sure you do not save your sign-on information when logging in. Clear your browser's cache and history after each session so that your account information is removed.

Use Software Protection

- Make sure that your home computer has the most current anti-virus software. Anti-virus software needs frequent updates to guard against new viruses. Make sure that you download the anti-virus updates as soon as you are notified that a download is available.
- Make sure that your home computer has the most current Spyware scanner software to detect and eliminate spyware. Spyware, commonly known as adaware, keyloggers or Trojans, is embedded on a webpage, e-mail, spam mail or attachments. When you open the infected item, this software is secretly installed onto your computer. Spywares are capable of capturing your keystrokes as you enter your personal or account information online.
- Install a personal firewall to help prevent unauthorized access to your home computer, especially if you connect through a cable or DSL modem.
- Use the latest recommended Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Browser version, or one that supports 128-bit encryption. If you use Internet Explorer, you need to deactivate the "Auto Complete" function to prevent any user ID and PIN from being stored.

1. Launch your Internet Explorer and click on "Tools" >> "Internet Options" >> "Content"
2. Under "Personal Information," click on "AutoComplete"
3. Uncheck "User names and passwords on forms" and click on "Clear Passwords."
4. Click on "OK" to save the changes.

- If you are using a Windows OS, ensure File and Print sharing is disabled while online, particularly if you are linked to the Internet via any broadband connection, digital subscriber lines or cable modems.
- Avoid downloading suspicious programs that allow your PC to share files on the Internet.
- Do not install software or run programs of unknown origin.

Monitor Your Transactions

- Check your accounts on a regular basis by monitoring your transactions regularly. Review your transaction history and bank statements as soon as you receive them to make sure that your statements reflect your transactions. Immediately report any irregularities.
- Contact BancNet or your Bank immediately should you encounter any difficulties or irregularities.

Security Tips for E-mail

- You should never disclose your personal or account information, ATM PIN/Cash Advance PIN via e-mail. If you believe someone is trying to commit fraud by pretending to be a BancNet representative, please contact the BancNet Helpdesk immediately at +63(2) 894-5952.
- Scan any attachments you receive via e-mail and immediately delete any suspicious e-mails with attachments.
- Be wary of messages that claim they contain "patches" to fix or upgrade your system; no software vendor sends out patches via e-mail—they must be downloaded from the software vendor's own website.
- Be alert for scam e-mails. These may appear to come from a trusted business or friend, but actually are designed to trick you into downloading a virus or jumping to a fraudulent website and disclosing sensitive information.

Moving forward with new products and services

MORE ADVANTAGES ARE COMING UP FOR BancNet cardholders as the ATM network turns 16 years old.

The ATM card's original function of doing cash withdrawals and balance inquiries has since expanded to other services to meet the ever growing needs of bank clients. Today, it has become an indispensable part of people's wallets so much that it has been looked upon as the "Swiss Army knife" of banking given its many uses. Not only can cardholders access their account anytime, anywhere but they can also pay bills, buy things and transfer funds using their ATM cards.

BancNet doesn't stop there as the company remains committed in providing more benefits to its cardholders with the introduction of new and innovative services.

Bills payment via Point of Sale (POS) terminals

It was back in 1993 when BancNet introduced its bills payment facility to pay bills for utilities, credit cards, cable TV, telecommunication companies, insurance, Internet and even make donations to various charities through the ATM. Today, cardholders can pay their bills through any of the 2,000 ATMs strategically located nationwide or by simply accessing the BancNet website at www.bancnetonline.com

BancNet Bills Payment has further expanded its accessibility by venturing into other channels such as the Point of Sale or POS terminal.

POS, a cashless and hassle free way of making payments, has been mostly associated with its use for cashless purchases. It will now be used for bills payment and will be initially available for PLDT. Their cardholders can pay their telephone bills by simply swiping their ATM cards in any PLDT business center and have their phone bill directly debited from their account.

Biller institutions now have something to look forward to as the service minimizes cash handling at the cashier and is secure due to the double transaction authorization by BancNet and the issuing member bank. More payment transactions can also be facilitated over the counter because of a shorter processing time which means less queuing at the cashiers.

SSS Loan Repayments via BancNet

Utilizing its proven, secure and reliable ATM network as a platform, BancNet eventually became a dependable and efficient collection channel for SSS when the network developed the EDI-SSSNet. Member banks in turn were able to offer this valuable service to corporate clients along with their basic banking services.

Further advancing the scope of the SSS services, BancNet and SSS have recently launched the SSS Loans Repayment System, a web-based service that allows employers to electronically transmit the monthly loan repayments of their employee to SSS.

With this system, employers no longer need to go through the manual process of paying separately to their bank then submitting their list of loan repayments to SSS.

Smart Mobile Banking

Similar to the ATM card, mobile phones have likewise become a staple part of our everyday life. It has also ventured into other functionalities beyond voice communication.

BancNet mobile banking service was first introduced to the public in 2004 allowing BancNet cardholders to access their bank accounts through their Globe mobile phones.

It the succeeding year, another telecom giant, Smart embarked with BancNet on a mobile banking project and is scheduled to launch the service this year. Smart subscribers who are cardholders of any BancNet member bank can now also do balance inquiry, bills payment, funds transfer, prepaid card reload, check book reorder and other secure banking transactions using their Smart mobile phones.

A history rich in innovations

BancNet is the biggest ATM network in the country with 29 constituent banks; counting among them are top tier local universal banks, international banks and rural banks. The consortium has over 2,000 ATMs nationwide serving over 4 million cardholders.

Starting operations in 1990, BancNet has gone beyond ATM banking through the synergy of resources and best utilization of technology. To complement its member banks' products and services, BancNet has expanded its cardholders' payment options by offering several channels such as the ATM, mobilephone, the Internet and point-of-sale (POS) terminals.

The BancNet ATM card can now be conveniently and safely used not only for balance inquiry and cash widthdrawals, but also to pay bills, buy things and transfer funds.

Our milestones through the years

1990 - BancNet, Inc. formally starts operations on July 17, 1990 with eight (8) member banks in Allied Banking Corporation, China Banking Corporation, Citytrust, Interbank, Metropolitan Banking Corporation, PCI Bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation and Security Banking Corporation. By October 1990, Citibank N.A. joined the network followed by Philbank in December 1991 thereby bringing the total number of member banks to ten.

1993 - BancNet introduces Bills Payment, paving the way for cardholders to pay bills for utilities, credit cards, cable TV, telecommunication companies, insurance, Internet and even make donations to various charities through ATMs.

1994 - BancNet launches its Point-of-Sale facility which allows debit card shopping and credit card authorization. BancNet cardholders can now buy from groceries, department stores, specialty shops, drugstores, gas stations and other accredited merchants using their BancNet ATM cards.

In the same year, BancNet interconnects with another ATM network, Megalink.

1997 - BancNet becomes an Internet service provider, offering lower rates to its member banks.

1999 - The Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) facility is introduced, automating company-to-company exchange of data. Electronic transmission of monthly social security contributions became its first and most popular application.

2000 - BancNet pioneers in offering InterBank Fund Transfer through the ATM in the Philippines.

2001 - BancNet launches BancNet Online, the country's first and only ATM Banking on the Internet.

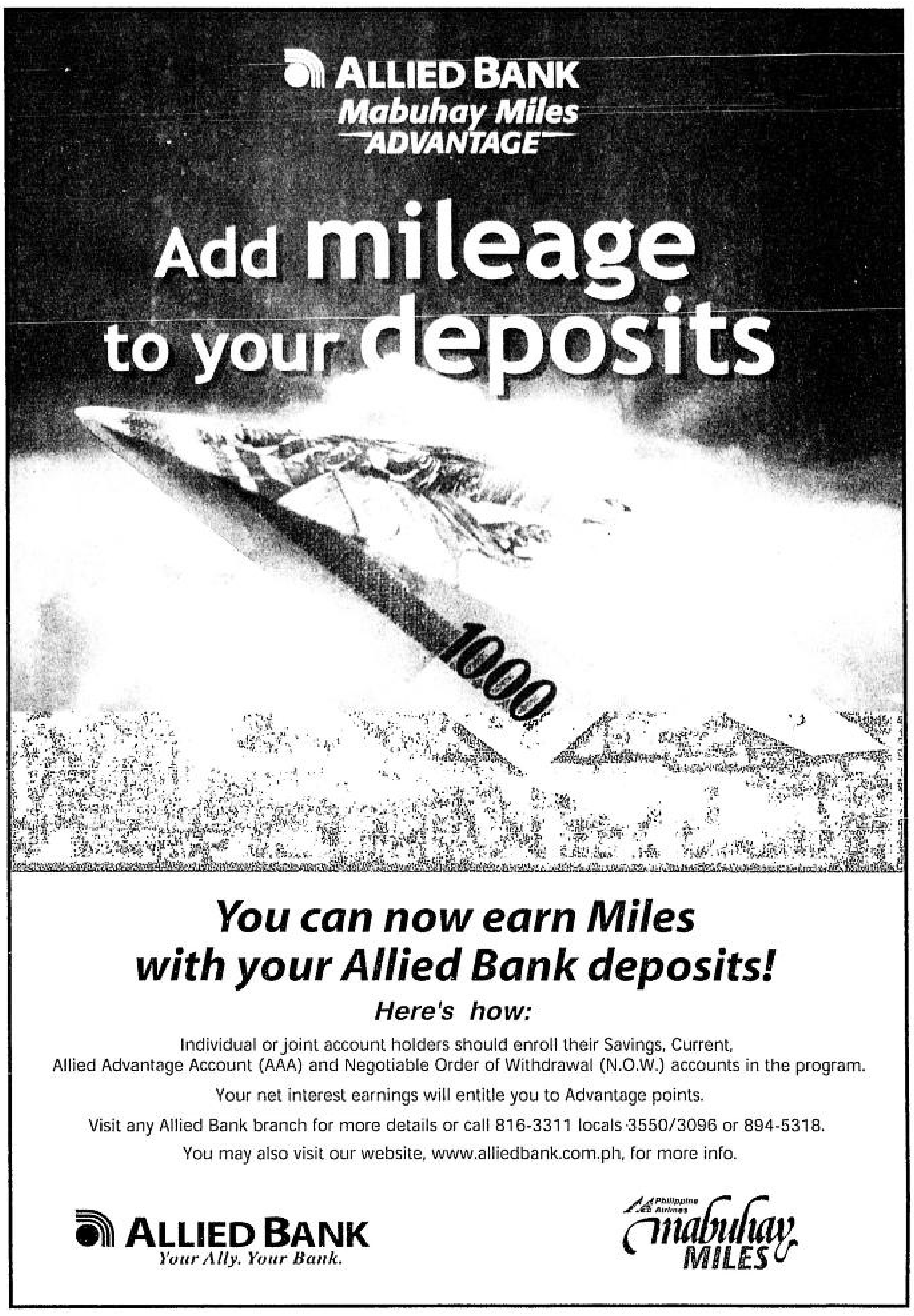
2002 - BancNet evolves into a multi-channel payments gateway.

2003 - BancNet ties up with the Bureau of Internal Revenue for Internet tax payment service.

2004 - BancNet introduces SMS Mobile Banking Service

2005 BancNet enters into an agreement with Shanghai-based ATM switch network China Union Pay (CUP) to open up the facilities of each network to the other.

2006 - BancNet and ExpressNet link up completing the interconnection of ALL three ATM networks in the Philippines.



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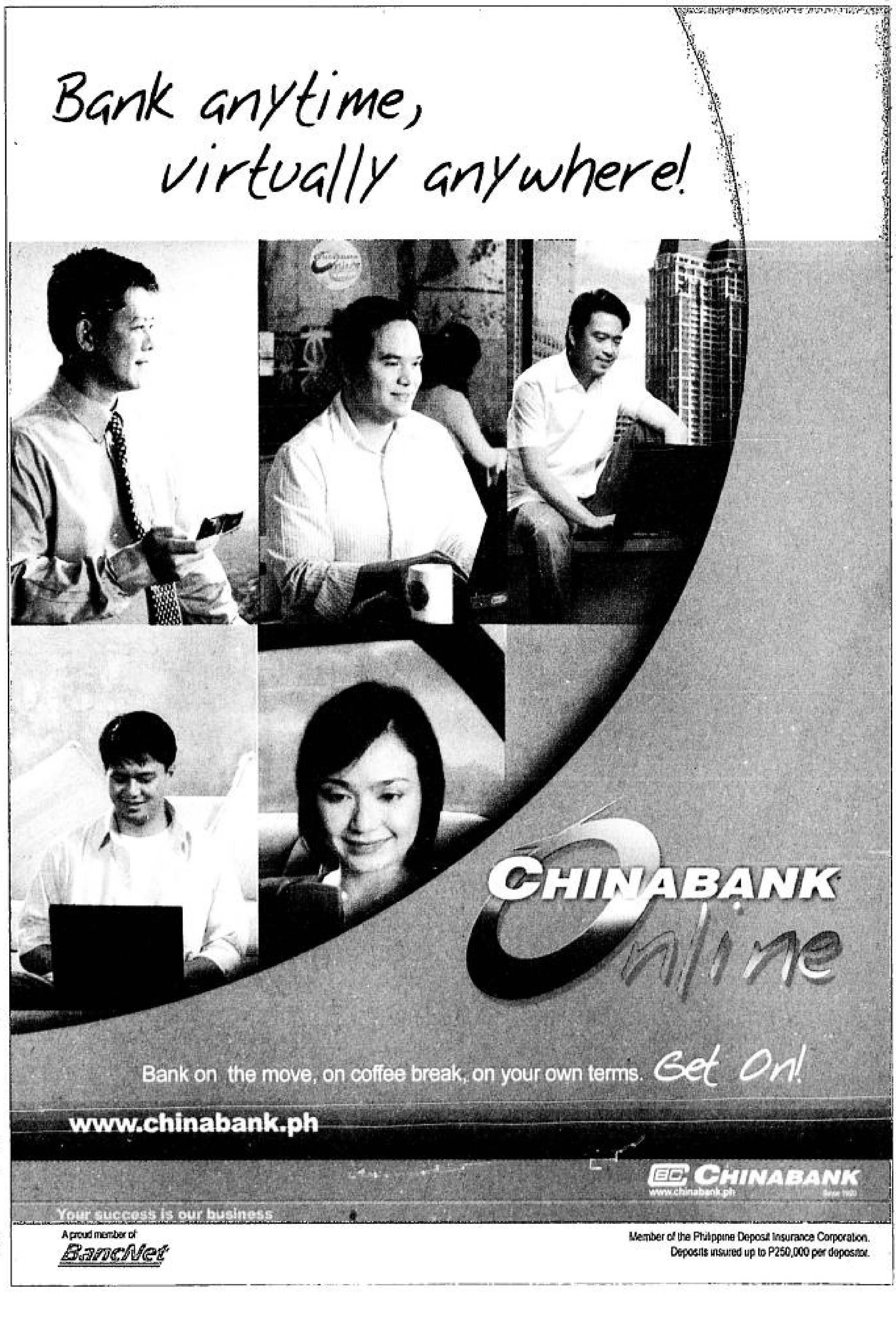

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BANCNET'S NEW MEMBER BANKS

BancNet
GREEN BANK
Membership
contract signing

GREEN BANK
New BancNet member bank, Green Bank (from left) Security Bank SVP Joven Hernandez, BancNet President Francisco Caparros Jr., BancNet Chairman Angelito Villanueva, Green Bank President and CEO Omar Andaya, Green Bank VP Agnes Andaya and Security Bank VP Buddy Serrano

OPPORTUNITY MICROFINANCE BANK (OMB)
From left, Chinatrust EVP Anthony Robles, BancNet President Francisco Caparros Jr., BancNet Chairman Angelito Villanueva, OMB President Noel Alcaide, OMB VP Fidel Asinas, Chinatrust VP and Mandrake Medina.

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BANCO SAN JUAN
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Chinatrust
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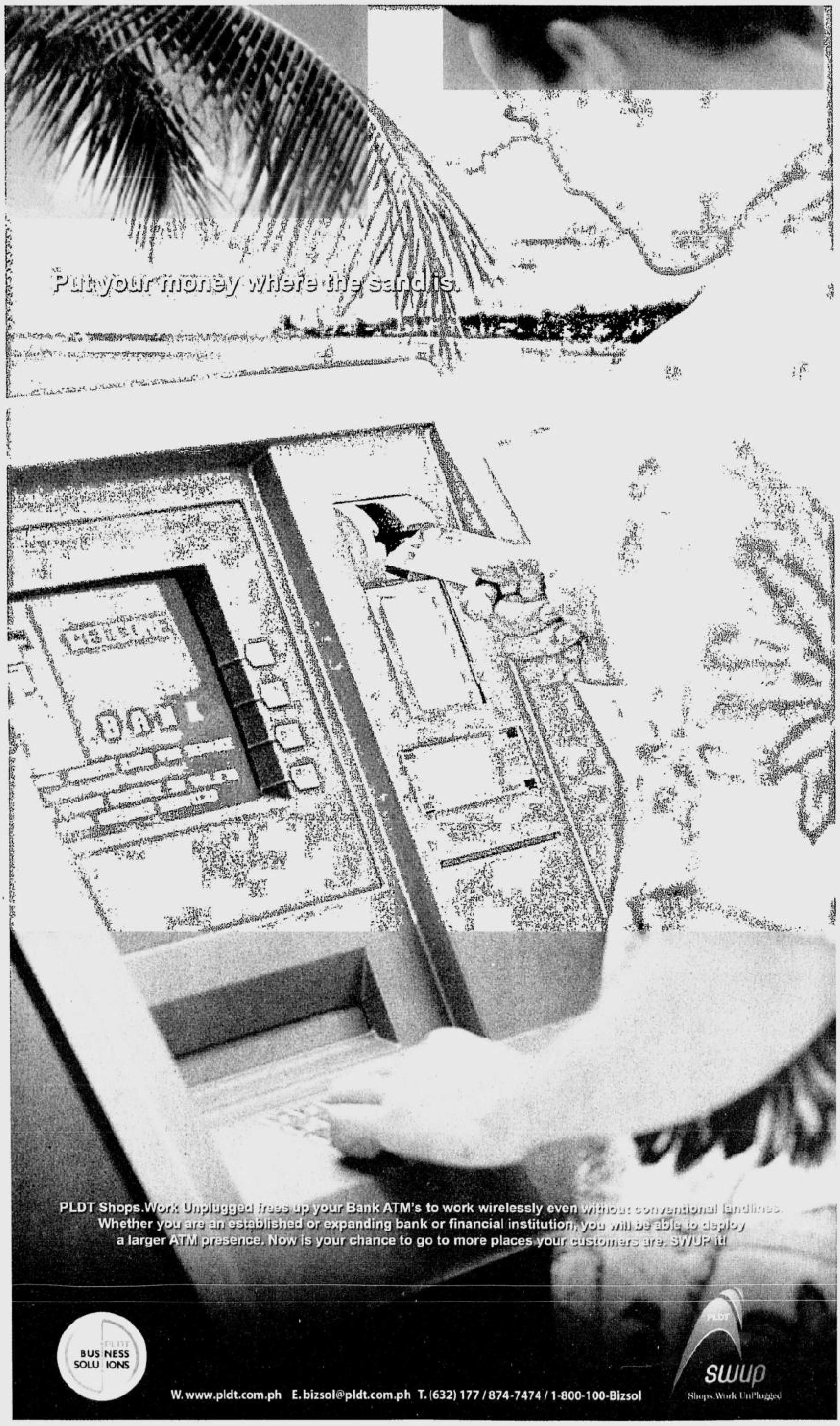

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on the 'Jelo Submarine' /C4
▣ **Manila Polo Club**
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LIFESTYLE

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MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Well-deserved tribute to Joya

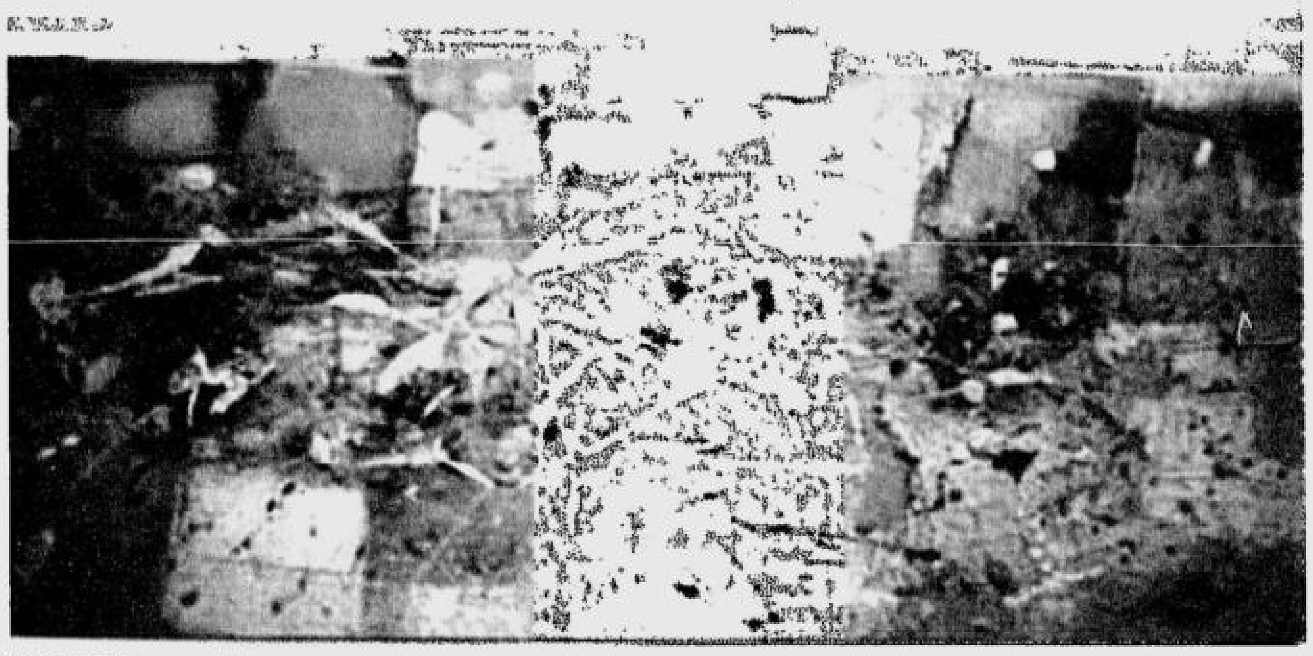
By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THREE YEARS AFTER HIS proclamation as National Artist for the Visual Arts, which came eight years after his death, José T. Joya is finally getting a well-deserved tribute.

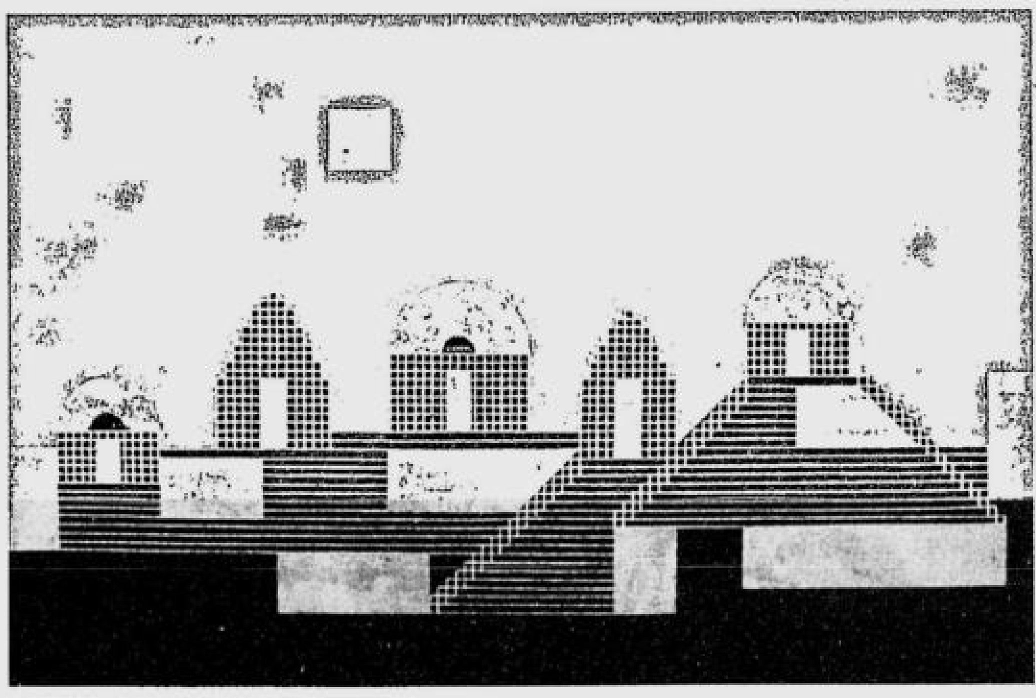
Organized by the Association for Philippines-China Understanding (Apcu), in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Museum of the Philippines, the exhibit, "Tribute to José T. Joya" (Tambunting-Villonco Hall, Museum of the Filipino People, National Museum, Agrifina Circle, until July 30), puts together the artist's prodigious output of over four decades.

His struggles and rise as an abstract expressionist, as well as the critical and commercial success he reaped in the last decade of his life,

WELL-DESERVED/ C2



"WARM Afternoon"



"CITIES of the Past"

Arturo Luz:
Streamlining Philippine art

By Cid Reyes
Contributor

2006 IS AN AUSPICIOUS year for contemporary Philippine art. In November, one of the last remaining giants from that Golden Age of Philippine art is celebrating his 80th year—a milestone by any standard.

Elder art luminary National Artist Arturo Luz remains to be the preeminent artist in the country, mastering the various mediums of painting, sculpture, printmaking, collage, photography and jewelry.

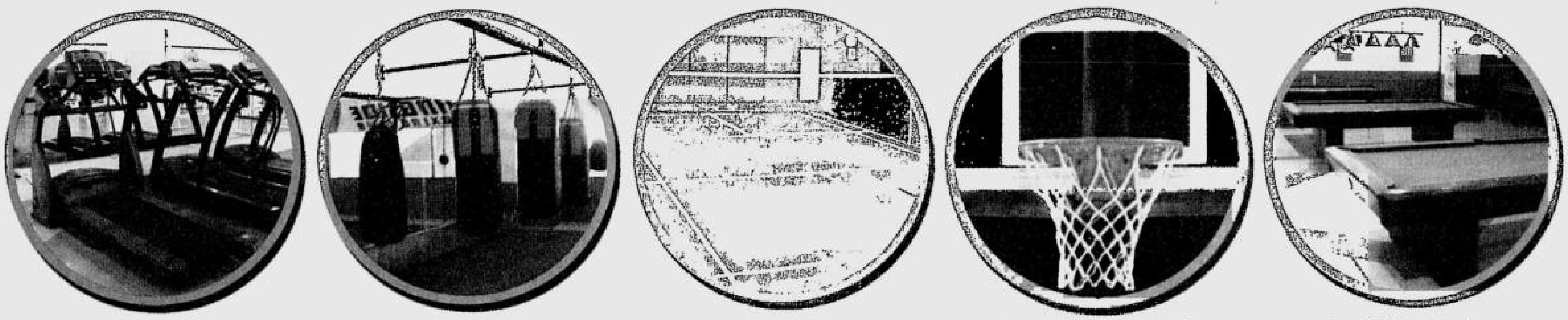
As art manager, his career is unsurpassed: curator/owner of the eponymous, longest-running art gallery (40 years till its closure in 2001); executive director of Design Center, the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Philippine Art. This is the artist who has declared: "I'm a worker. I don't know what vacations or weekends are."

Possessor of a distinctive style and sensibility, Luz gained early recognition since his fist solo show in 1951 at the Manila Hotel, an exhibition organized by the artist's own mother, the late, well-respected interior decorator Rosario Dimayuga Luz. The show consisted of works brought by her son from his years of education in the US and sojourns in Europe.

It was in that show that Luz first met the so-called Neo-Realists: Vicente Manansala, Hernando Ocampo, Cesar Legaspi, Romeo Tabuena, Ramon Estela and Victor Oteyza. The label, which really substitutes for the idea of modernity, came from critic-painter Emilio Aguilar Cruz.

In 1952, barely a year after his ar-

ARTURO/ C2



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July 23 Mandaluyong City Chess Tournament, 2/L, 10 am
July 25 Taekwondo Demonstration, 2/L, 4 pm
July 28 Baywalk Bodies Mall Tour, 2/L, 4 pm
July 29 Rachelle Ann Go Mall Tour, 2/L, 4 pm
July 30 Mark Bautista Mall Tour, 2/L, 4 pm
Tuesdays, Stand up Comedy @ Cuba Libre, 9 pm
Fridays & Saturdays, Live Bands @ Cuba Libre, 9 pm

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July 22 Baywalk Bodies Album Tour, 2/L, 4 pm
July 23 Mark Bautista Album Tour, 2/L, 4 pm
July 29 Basketball Shootout featuring PBA Player, 3/L
July 30 Starland Singing Star Showdown, 4/L, 4 pm
Mondays, Live Bands @ Marks Bar, 2/L, 6 pm
Tuesdays, Acoustic Nights @ the Activity Area, 2/L, 6 pm
Thursdays, Stand up Comedy @ Marks Bar, 2/L, 8 pm
Sundays, Audition Nights @ the Activity Area, 2/L, 7 pm

starmall LAS PIÑAS
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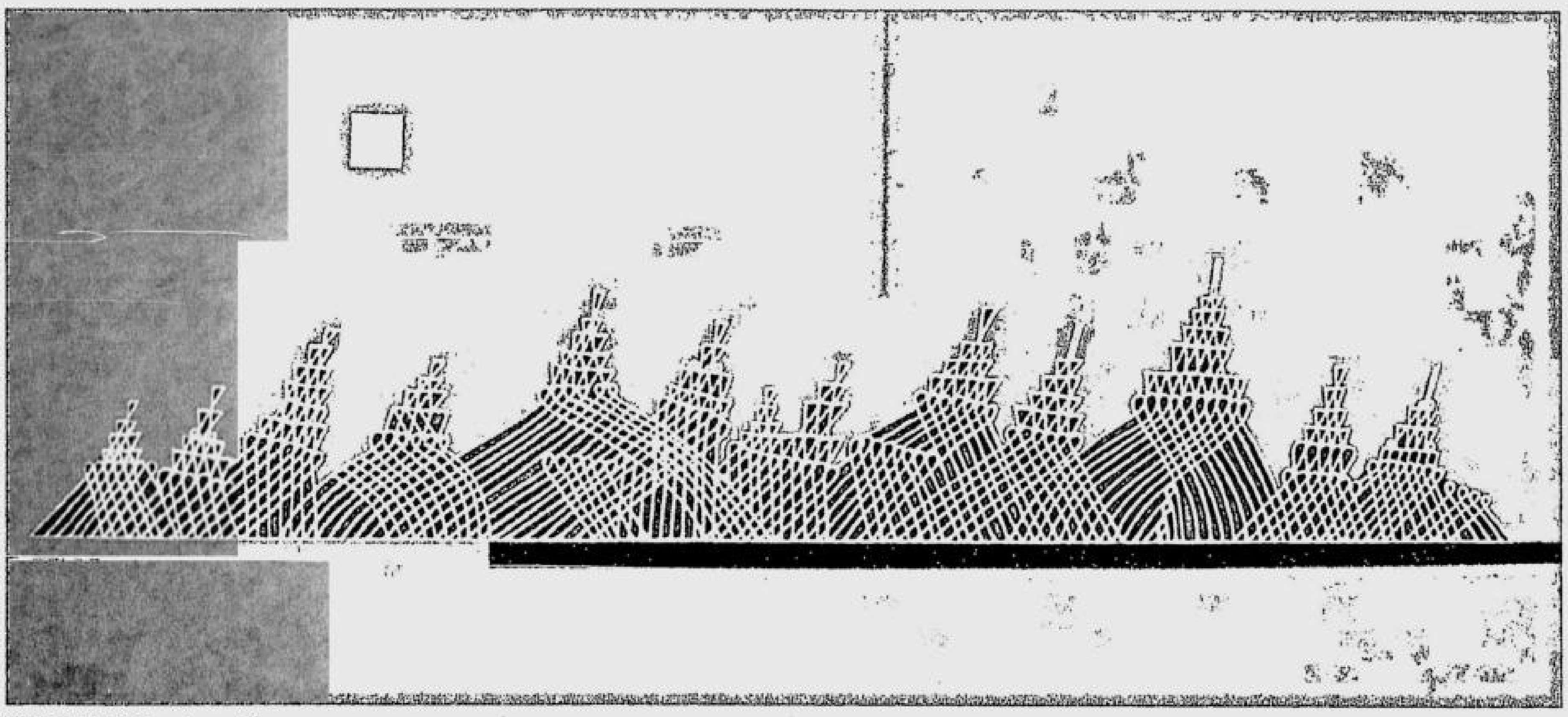
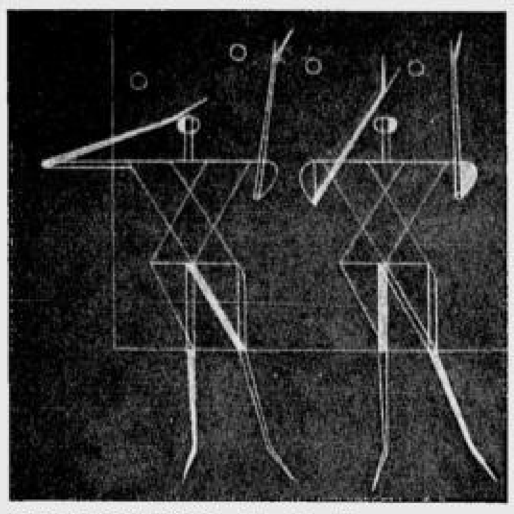
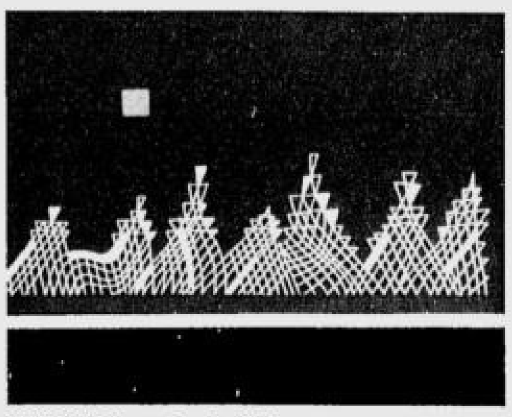
July 17- 23 Scholastic @ Books for Less, G/F, 10 am
July 28- 30 MySpa Trade Fair, 2/L, 10 am
Mondays & Saturdays, Comedy Nights @ The Strip, 7 pm
Tuesdays, Ballroom Nights @ Marks Sports Bar, 7 pm
Wednesdays, Live Bands @ The Strip, 7 pm



"IMAGINARY Landscape"



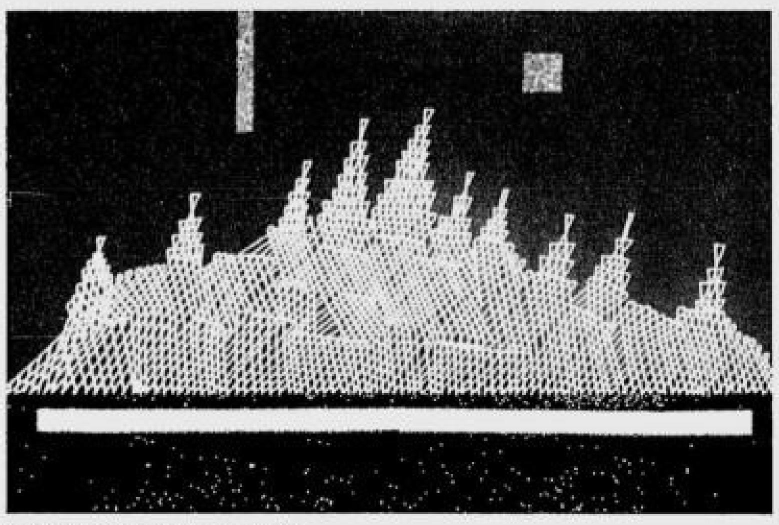
"PERFORMERS: Two Jugglers"



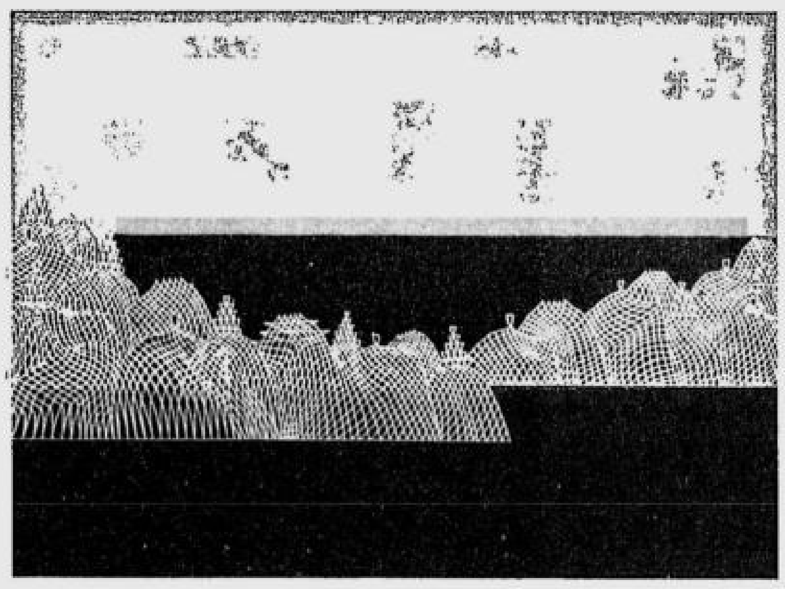
"WHITE Temples, India"

Arturo Luz: Streamlining . . .

From page C1



"IMAGINARY Landscape"



"SACRED Temples"

rival from abroad, Luz won first prize in the annual competition of the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP).

The prize-winning work was "Bagong Taon," a painting inspired by the sight of a cyclist, with two friends in tow. To animate the essentially still image, Luz added the tooting horn. In retrospect, this landmark seminal painting prefigures the future classic works of Luz: the musicians and performers series of linear cyclist and acrobats.

Indeed, if any influence on Luz could be ascribed to the Neo-Realists, it is the choice of subject matter: the *barong-barong* or squatter shanties and the vendor image. Among the early works are "Los Borrachos," an amusingly solemn depiction of an aftermath of a drinking spree; "Lavandera" and "Skipping Rope." Already evident in the delineation of the human figure was the tendency toward attenuation and stylization, both in the service of simplification, while marshalling the rigor of line. The young Luz had always admired the works of Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo.

Still life

Another fascination was the still life, an arrangement of various objects in space. In particular, Luz favored the stark shapes of bottles with their explicit forms. Later in the '60s, the artists depicted ancient pottery, vases, jars, pitchers, bowls and cups.

These would comprise the "Object of the Past" series. All these works were informed by reductivist spirit, reducing shapes into their essence.

Through the decades, Luz sustained the visual qualities now enshrined in the canon of his art: economy of line; elegance and precision of design; a delicate balance between tension and airiness; an internal rhythm within a complex composition; mental exhilaration over emotional content; a cool discipline despite a plentitude of improvisations; and a determined will to treat black and white as colors, enlivened only by hues found at the opposite end of the spectrum—royal reds and golds alternating with mustard-yellows, earthen browns, and burnished ochers.

All these qualities are anchored on a guiding intelligence and an austere sensibility, variously described by critics as "mandarin," "seigneurial," and "cerebral."

What, in fact, Luz has succeeded in doing is to streamline Philippine art, with its predilection for baroque and rococo shapes and all the cosmetic colors of the rainbow.

To streamline is to make simpler and more efficient, by stripping an object or image of its nonessentials, in order to achieve a competent and integrated design. This is the triumph of linearism as exemplified by the art of Arturo Luz.

Regard, for instance, the two major series of "Celebration" and "Cities of the Past."

"Celebration" is a figure-scape of jugglers and acrobats, a starkly joyous human still life. "The Execution" is fastidious, with each performer punctiliously placed in space, but always in relation to the whole, resulting in a syncopated interaction, governed always by an invisible grid.

With magisterial grandeur, the subject of the "Cities of the Past" series inevitably came to the artist's life at an opportune and predestined time.

Asian sojourn

With his work accomplished at the three government institutions which he headed, Luz embarked on an Asian sojourn in 1988. He visited the ancient temple sites of Asia: Borobodur in Indonesia; Sukhothai, the original capital of Thailand; Angkor Wat in Cambodia; and Rajasthan in India.

Impressed by the grandeur of the Asian temples and places, the artist started to translate and transform their architecture by transcending the literal reality of stolid stone. This he subsumed within his basic linearism, webbed in the airy lightness of a multitude of lines, each tier rising upon the other in sequential procession, until, at the apex, the looming structure is crowned by a dome or cupola. This is architectural panorama as a potent visual theme.

What counters the airiness of the grid lines are the collaged pieces of paper, crumpled to a fist until malleable, spread and pasted tightly on the canvas surface, and then evenly brushed with pigments of gold and red, which flood and seep through the now crackled, lace-like ground. The effect is strikingly rich and luminously opulent, decidedly a sumptuous touch to the otherwise severe and ascetic Luz style.

Even at 80, Arturo Luz shows no sign of retiring from painting. Blessed with unfailing good health, he continues to work prodigiously. Indeed, he belongs to the tradition of long-lived artists—Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Miro and, of course, our very own Anita Magsaysay-Ho easily come to mind—whose creativity continues to be spurred in the autumn of their lives. Certainly this is cause for celebration.

Happy birthday, Mr. Luz!

(This article was written by the author in conjunction with the exhibition "Temples, Performers & Cities of the Past" ongoing at Galerie Joaquin-Main until July 26. Galerie Joaquin-Main is at 371 P. Guevarra St. cor. Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan, with tel. nos. 7239253 or 7239418, e-mail galerie_joaquin2003@yahoo.com or visit www.galeriejoaquin.com.)

Well-deserved tribute to Joya

From page C1

are documented through his works put together by his sister, Josie Baldovino, and a number of collectors, brokers and friends.

The pillar of modern art in the country pursued his calling in a steadfast, consistent and truly audacious manner. Through four decades, beginning in the 1950s, Joya nurtured his art, exploring its full potential from a medium of representation to modernism. In time, he transformed it into a personal iconography of Abstract Expressionism.

Joya first gained prominence when he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1953, from the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts, magna cum laude, the first to have earned such a distinction from the state university's Fine Arts college.

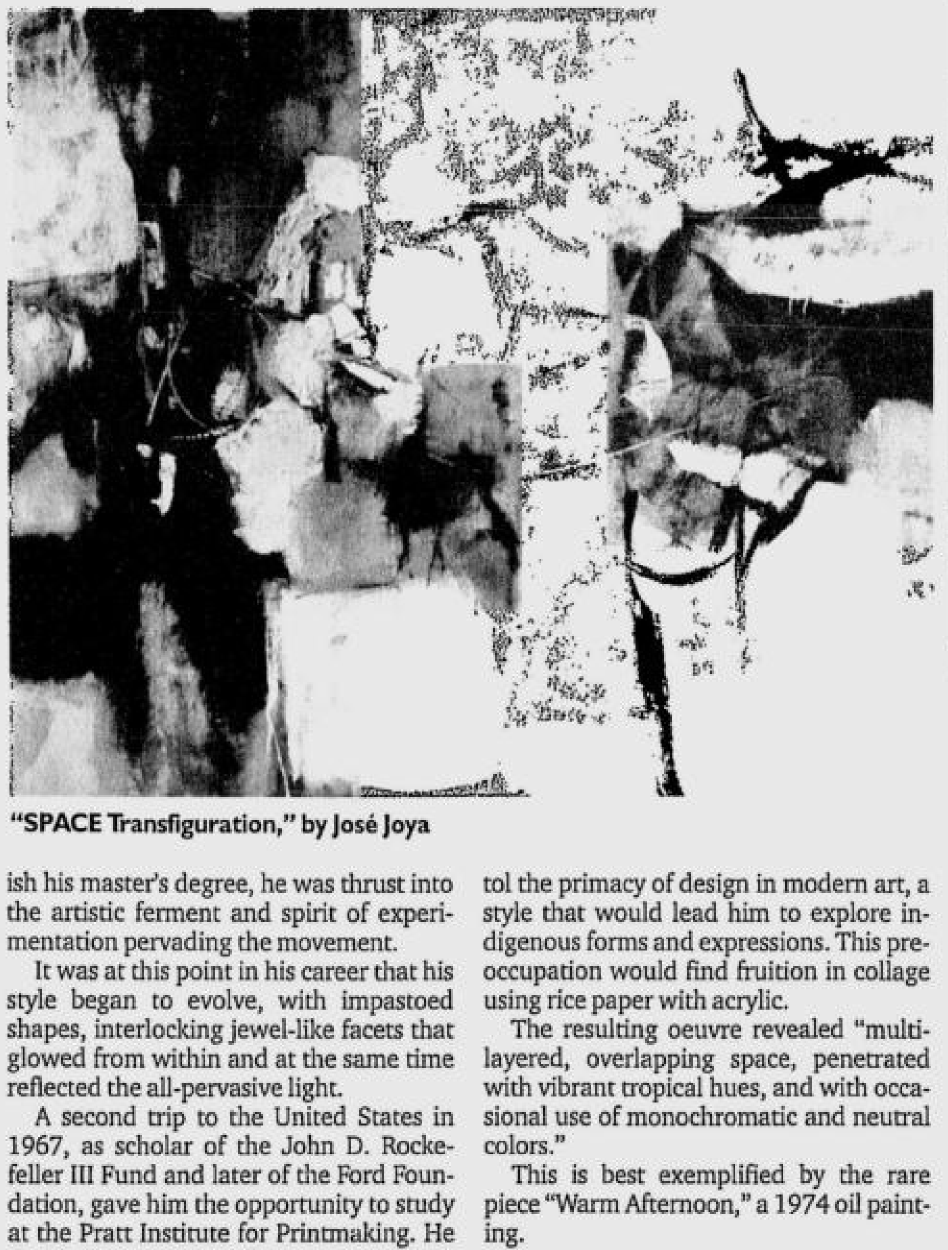
A year before his graduation, he had won first prize in the Art Association of the Philippines annual contest, for his oil painting "Approaching Storm," a work that prefigured his obsessive and unrelenting energy and dynamism.

Lasting impressions

Having aligned himself with the Modernists who gravitated toward the Philippine Art Gallery, he was caught in the crossfire between traditionalist mentors and modernist friends. As with his peers, the ensuing flames of intellectualism in modern art had fanned his imagination, enflaming his passion beyond words.

In 1954, he took up Design Studies at the University of Santo Tomas. After completing his studies, he received a travel grant from the Spanish government's Instituto de Cultura Hispanica. His European sojourn left lasting impressions from the places he visited and on his images that eventually found their way into his oeuvre.

As can be gleaned from the retrospective, Joya soon became a staunch disciple of the school of Abstract Expressionism with Jackson Pollock and the New York School as its major proponents.



"SPACE Transfiguration," by José Joya

Having been awarded a Fulbright-Smith Mundt scholarship to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan to finish his master's degree, he was thrust into the artistic ferment and spirit of experimentation pervading the movement.

It was at this point in his career that his style began to evolve, with impastoed shapes, interlocking jewel-like facets that glowed from within and at the same time reflected the all-pervasive light.

A second trip to the United States in 1967, as scholar of the John D. Rockefeller III Fund and later of the Ford Foundation, gave him the opportunity to study at the Pratt Institute for Printmaking. He decided to work there for two years.

On his way home, he toured Europe, visiting art centers in the various cities of the continent. It was during this trip that he indulged in his other passion—drawing—which has been documented in his two books of drawings, the first in 1973, and the second, "Joya on Joya," in 1978.

It was in the '70s when Joya would extol the primacy of design in modern art, a style that would lead him to explore indigenous forms and expressions. This preoccupation would find fruition in collage using rice paper with acrylic.

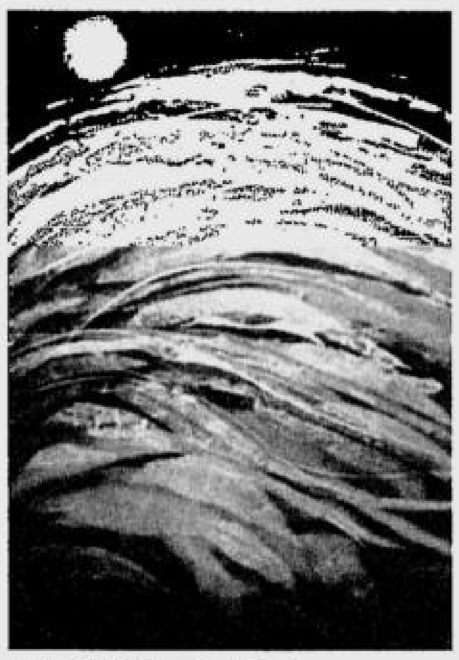
The resulting oeuvre revealed "multi-layered, overlapping space, penetrated with vibrant tropical hues, and with occasional use of monochromatic and neutral colors."

This is best exemplified by the rare piece "Warm Afternoon," a 1974 oil painting.

Greatest challenge

It was also in the 1970s that Joya found himself engaged in a variety of media and forms, ranging from ceramic designs and figure sketches to oil and acrylic paintings.

But he found the greatest challenge in abstraction, where, as the critic Alice Guillermo wrote, "he probes into emotional significations of color with hues as terms in a vocabulary for capturing moods, nuances of feeling and inner states, while thoroughly pursuing artistic concepts, problems and values."



"GLOBAL Warming," by Joya

Joya was equally involved in the academe, serving as dean of the UP College of Fine Arts in Diliman in 1970-78. He also helped establish the Fine Arts program in UP in Cebu, sponsoring a scholarship program for young and deserving talents and an annual competition named after him.

Joya was also involved in numerous outreach programs that promoted cultural interaction, including that of the Association for Philippine-China Understanding, now headed by his sister Josie. He propagated art consciousness among the masses, bringing art to depressed urban areas, helping form art groups across the country, such as Cebu, Iloilo and Bacolod, under the Art Association of the Philippines.

This tribute, even if belatedly accorded, is clearly intended to give Joya his rightful place as a towering figure in Philippine art. Having laid the foundations for an expressive and powerful modern art, he articulated its power, dynamism and vitality, an icon that continues to inspire and be emulated by succeeding generations of artists.

Bacolod artist

An emerging artist from Bacolod City who soaked up in the artistic ambience of José Joya's era, José Miguel Ma. Montinola had gone on to finishing a business course at De La Salle, subsequently becoming a successful self-made entrepreneur. But the lure of art must have rubbed off on his psyche, as he set out to make a second career in painting.

Montinola, who finds the time to paint every day despite his rigorous workday schedule, is one of the resident artists of Artes Figuras Gallery, on the ground floor of Piazza Sorrento, 13 Lacson St., in Bacolod City, a haven for many emerging artists.

A member of the Kada Martes group, he specializes in painting the nude, opting to delineate the female figure in glowing golden acrylic hues, focusing on the poetry of the body electric, without unduly exposing the face, which can be a source of distraction.

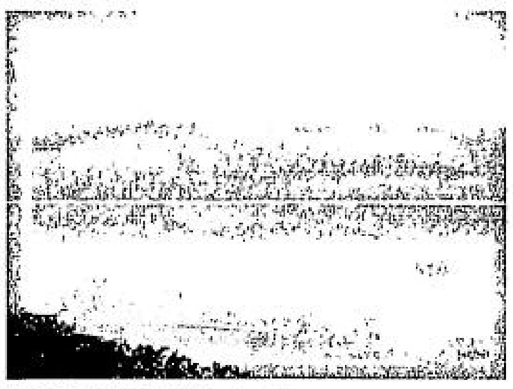
In addition, Montinola also paints urban landscapes, using watercolor as primary medium and mixing it to achieve special textural effects.

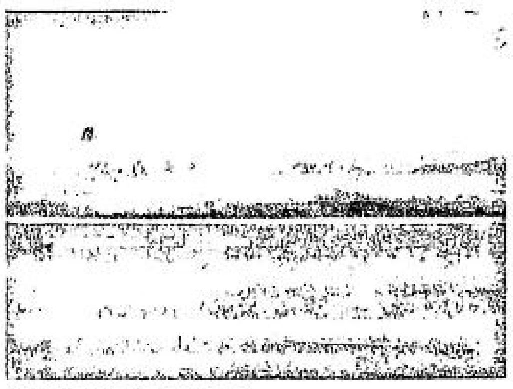
Executing this otherwise delicate medium to explore the three salient aspects of creation—land, sky and sea—the artist is clearly obsessed with both medium and subject in artistic and spiritual harmony.

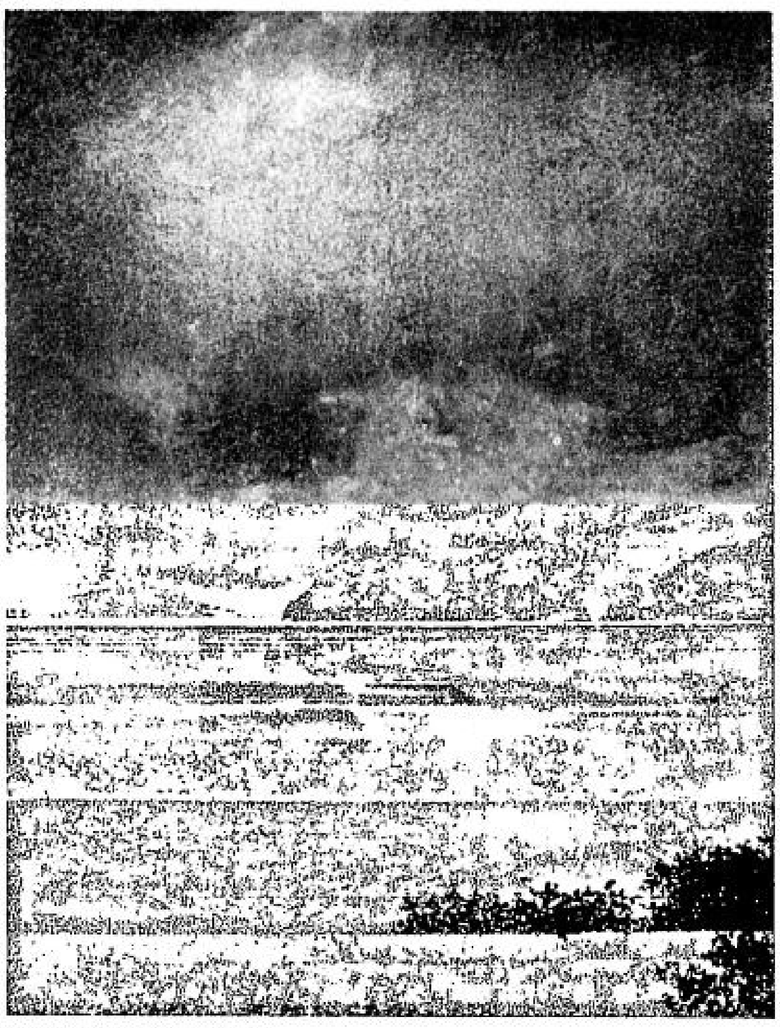
His palette evokes the ambience of some lost, time-warped setting, equally mysterious and dense as the human body.

Monti (his signature) is an artist who adheres not to the staid conventions of taste and popular aesthetics but out of an urgent need, like the master Joya, to reach out and attain a level of spiritual satisfaction.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com


"PEACESPACE" Series II


"PEACESPACE" Series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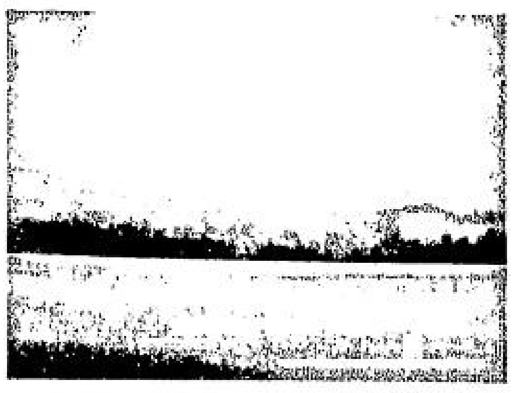

"PEACESPACE " Series

The soothing seascapes of Bañez

By Merci Melchor
Contributor

BANZ'S CANVASES HAVE ALWAYS been a visual treat. His steady horizontal strokes of gradiated colors and forms capture the tranquility and harmony of earth, sea and sky.

Some say his seascapes seem graphic in approach. This may be reflective of the artist's quarter-of-a-century work as a graphic and advertising designer.

Banz's canvases are masterpieces of serenity—almost to the point of transcendental meditation. He does not copy scenes but creates his imagery—his identity.

Bernardo Emmanuel "Banz" Bañez, a native of Baguio City, was born on Dec. 25, 1937. He was orphaned at age 7.

At the height of World War II, his house was bombed, instantly killing his parents and four others. Digging his way out of the rubble, the young boy along with a sister miraculously survived.

Undaunted, he worked his way through school, doing odd jobs—shining shoes, buying and selling old newspapers and bottles, and sometimes begging for food crumbs. Later, he took in drawing and designing jobs from poster-making to architectural rendering. He did all sorts of jobs, just to get through college.

In 1958, Banz graduated from the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts. After an advertising career for 25 years, he moved to painting—his true love—and the academe, teaching art at the College of the Holy Spirit.

BANZ Bañez

He took his master's degree in Fine Arts from the Asean Institute of Arts under the tutelage of Rod Paras-Perez.

Quest for peace

Banz was a jolly, hefty, bespectacled, crew-cut crooner of Frank Sinatra songs. Like most typical Filipino professionals, he joined civic, sports and religious organizations. He was the founder of grUPo, a group of artists who studied Fine Arts in UP.

He was an active member of the Saturday Group of Artists, the Watercolor Society of the Philippines, the Art Directors Club of the Philippines, and the Lions Club of Manila Sunshine.

"RAY of Hope"

An avid sports enthusiast, he was into chess, karate, ping-pong, basketball, *arnis*, and rifle-pistol shooting.

Unknown to many, Banz was a deeply religious person and a member of the LSS Charismatic Movement and the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals.

Early in his painting career, Banz formulated certain objectives for himself. First, like any serious artist, he aimed for identity, for a distinct style. "I would like people to recognize my work, even from a distance, and know it is my work without seeing my signature."

Second, he wanted to "touch and move" the soul of his viewers to a state of peace and serenity.

Perhaps his traumatic experience in childhood and the difficult struggle for survival during his teen years influenced his choice of the Peacespace theme.

Perhaps it was his quiet protest against man's vanishing ecology. Whatever the reason may be, his canvases are effective expressions of his almost obsessive "desire for peace."

Third, from 1 Timothy 6:18, he cited his dream "to be generous and willing to share" his God-given talent to help others.

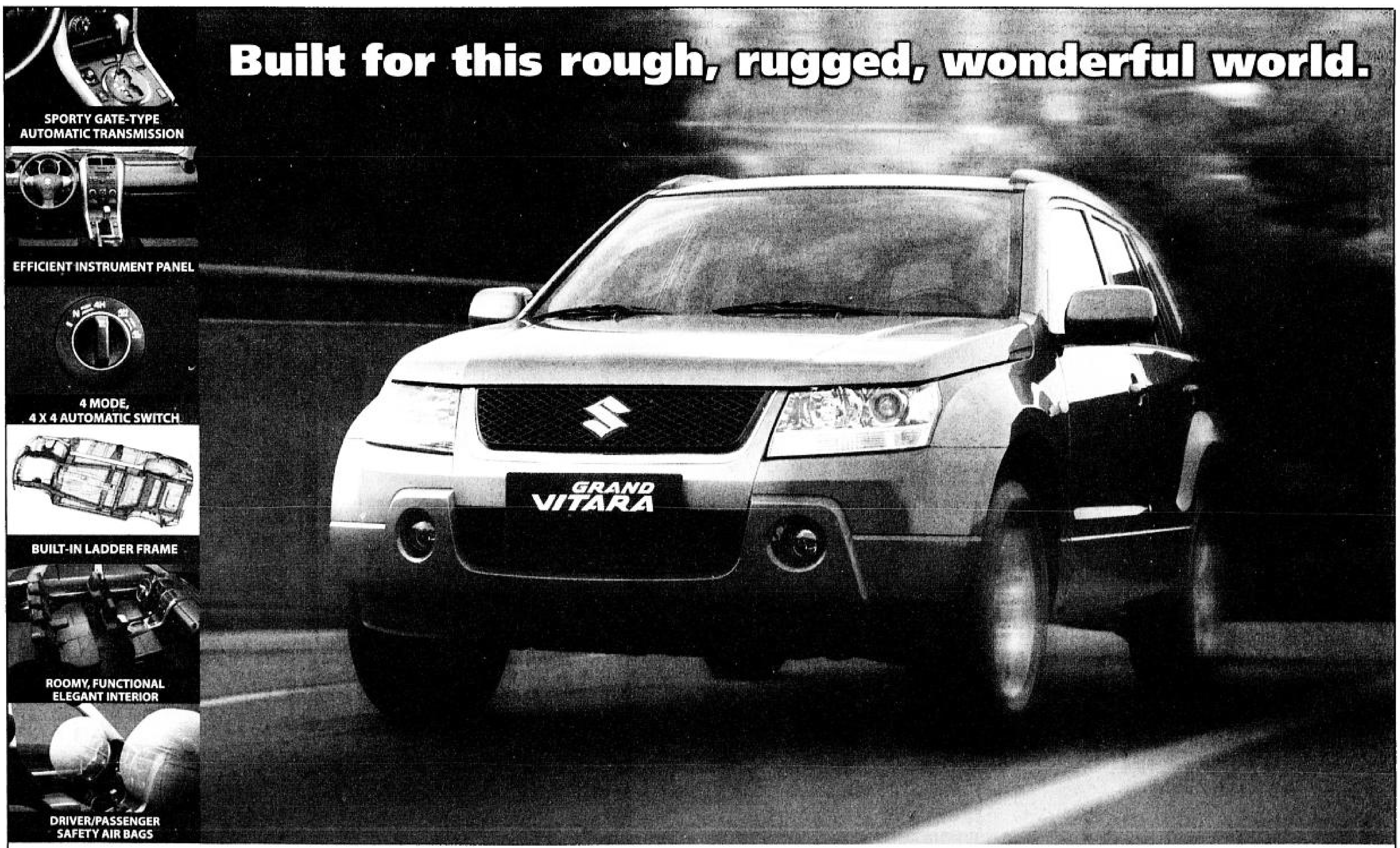
Knowing all these, I started to know the man. I started to understand the genius of the total artist, who has, indeed, achieved his objectives.

Where did Banz get his inspiration, his power of visual imagery?

Undoubtedly from his family—his wife Linda, who teaches piano, and his two children Darwin and Angeli; from his mentor Paras-Perez, who gave him the direction in the complexities of the painting process; and from his Maker, who endowed him with the special talent to touch the human spirit.

John Ruskin in his essay on "Modern Painters" wrote: "The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something… To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion, all in one."

Banz's works can be seen in "Peacespace Returns," his retrospective exhibit, at Artasia, 4/L, Bldg. A, Artwalk, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.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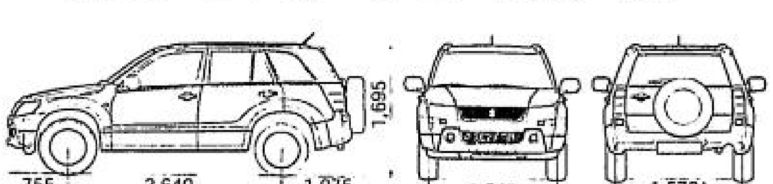

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All aboard the 'Jelo Submarine'

By Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

BUEN CALUBAYAN AND JAY Pacena have been buddies since college.

Both majored in Advertising Arts at the University of Santo Tomas College of Fine Arts and Design, where they now teach—the former handling Life Painting and Free-hand Drawing, the latter Television Art/Video Production/Short film, Basic Animation, and Basic Advertising Layout.

They are members of the Young Thomasian Artists Circle, whose group exhibit, "Dog/God," is touring nationwide and soon, to Korea and Singapore.

Calubayan and Pacena have teamed up again in 'Jelo Submarine," at Big Sky Mind Gallery (66 Doña J. Rodriguez, near E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave.; tel. 0917-8514606). The exhibit is a showcase of their fortes, Calubayan with his stylized portraits, and Pacena mixing media in his digital photo-manipulations.

'Jelo Submarine" is a testament to the long-standing friendship of the two that had seen them sharing heartbreaks back when they were lovelorn college boys resorting to singing the Beatles' hits to drown their blues. In the process, the Beatles' music had insinuated itself into their art, so that one of the band's songs, "Yellow Submarine," had become the monicker for anything that had to do with bathos, solace and art-making. Hence, 'Jelo Submarine."

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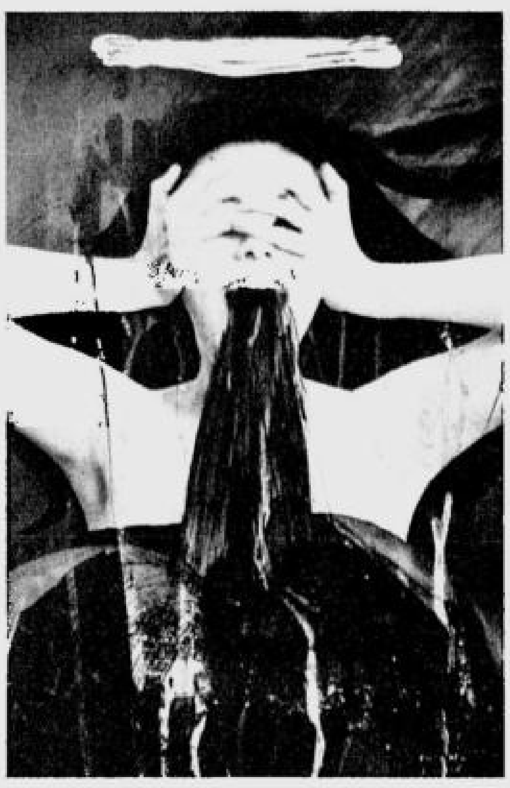
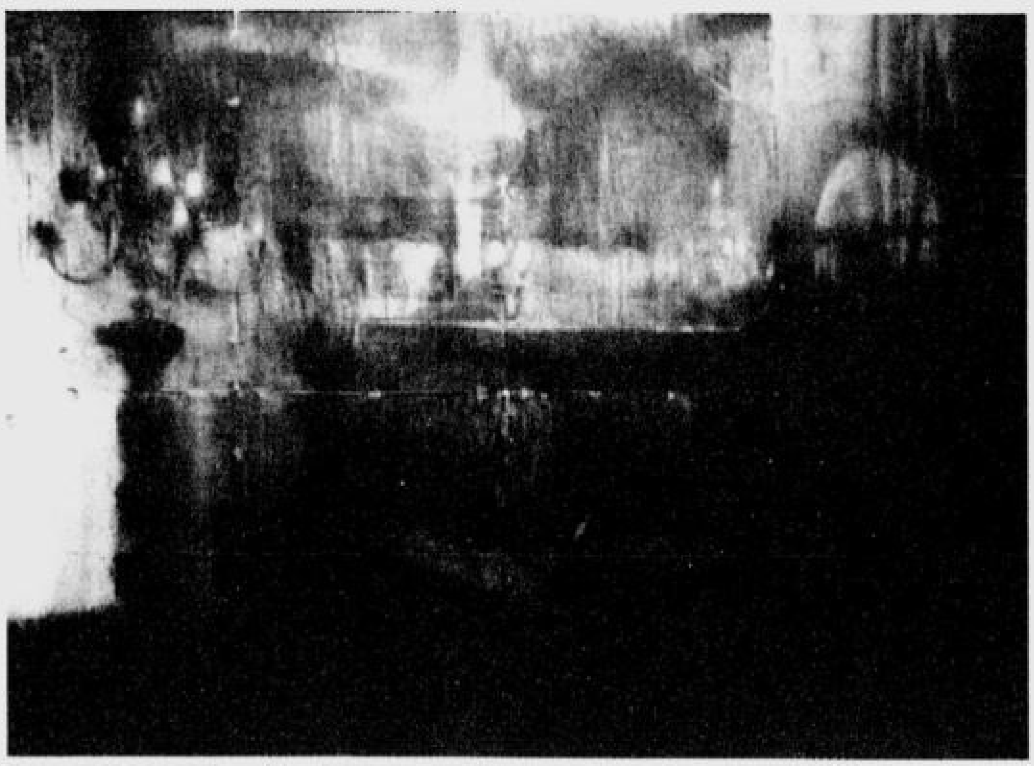
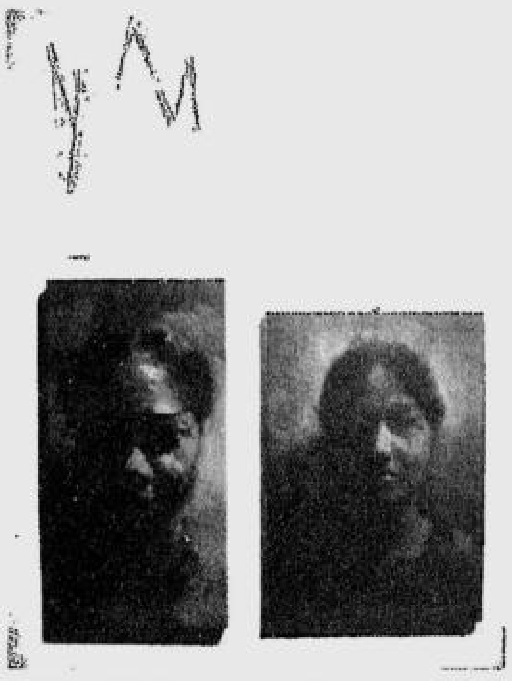
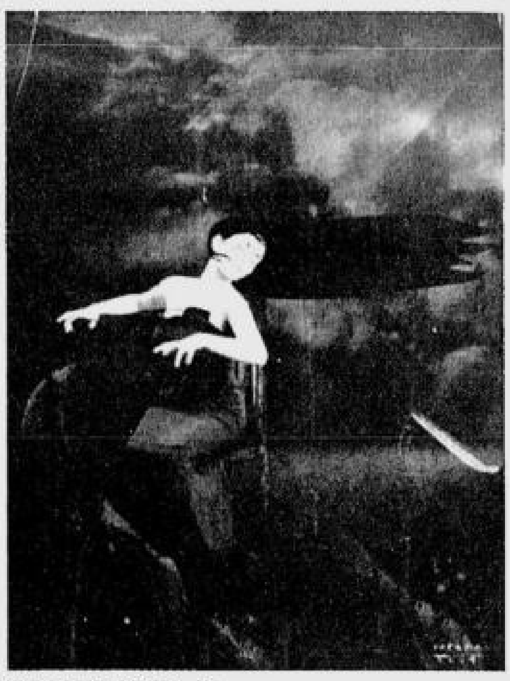

"TEARS," by Pacena

Exciting young artists Buen Calubayan and Jay Pacena chart new artistic paths


"UNREHEARSED Jazz," by Calubayan


"SUBMARINE Queen," by Calubayan


"DETUNED," by Pacena

In Calubayan's works, figures seem to dissolve into or emerge out of mottled backgrounds. The technique betrays his prowess at realist figuration.

In "Meek," the eyes and part of the nose seem covered by strokes that reach to the mouth; the varied colors spread out yet blend in a kinetic monochrome, the movement approximating the random brush. This subject with eyes staring is meekness itself, the absence of a mouth alluding perhaps to a certain diffidence about speech. Or the whole art-making is part of an unwrapping process, as though the subject were shedding a plaster membrane, about to take form from an amorphous mass, about to shed meekness.

Also characteristic of Calubayan's style is the inclusion of other faces or figures in some unobtrusive portion of the piece, which the viewer could only discover upon closer inspection. These seem secret figures peeking through accidental spaces that have been created as the artist strives to conceal the previous work. Half the fun of looking at a Calubayan work, in fact, comes from the pleasure of suddenly being accosted by these hidden figures.

Rather chilling is "Unrehearsed Jazz," a rendition of the artist's late father's wake. The hazy effect of smudging the charcoal results in an approximation of faded photographs. There are funeral torches and candles glowing eerily, and a barely discernible crucifix on an altar. The supernatural aura is heightened by lines slashed down on the canvas, like crease marks on a photo.

Portraits also show the same datedness, with chiaroscuro coming excellently into play. Those familiar with the actual people who inspired the paintings attest to the accurate likeness in spite of the rough paint application and fade-outs.

Pacena's body art

While Calubayan heavily paints image upon (or through) image, Pacena's digital art seems to have gone easy on its vintage layering. This time he took individual shots of various elements that he built into a composition, careful not to distort them heavily.

Though Pacena says he admires Pop Art progenitors such as Basquiat and Warhol, his style almost mirrors that of Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer. Both artists paint over photographs, their works falling under the body art genre. Both have gone through a phase of using their own images in their works and are particular about facial expressions.

Pieces by the Austrian artist in Britain's Tate collection carry the same rabid strokes of paint that either cover or defile the subject's body or parts of it, as if to erase or annihilate it.

With digital photography and the computer as his tools, Pacena may yet usher in a new breed of artists.

Pacena also seems to have entered another phase in his photo manipulation. Here are more careful executions—there's an apparent effort to keep images undisturbed when the paint mixes with picture-print chemicals.

Among the subjects is a clear-skinned woman in a striking red gown. She stands out against a dark, forbidding backdrop, which may remind some of the Carolina Herrera red-and-black haute couture ad in magazines years ago. The striking composition of the work may perhaps point to Pacena's advertising-art savvy.

Elements such as the playground slide in "Detuned" may indicate that these compositions are inspired by happy memories, compared to Pacena's past pieces that mostly dealt with self-doubt, self-castigation and self-restraint. But the artist discloses that his subjects are actually in a cemetery, unrecognizable because of overgrowth, signifying the passing of darker times.

Despite the relative happy note of most of Pacena's new works, old habits die hard. In "Tears," a deluge of tears runs from the subject's mouth. Pacena says the subject's eyes could not anymore handle the tears, so the mouth "runneth"—or "raineth"—over.

Calubayan and Pacena agree their art merely reflects their artistic vehicle and creative mindset; it's the submarine they ride through the sea of life, with its interludes of calm and storms. Both of them could sing the wave away, "We all live in a yellow submarine…"

E-mail the author at majorday@gmail.com

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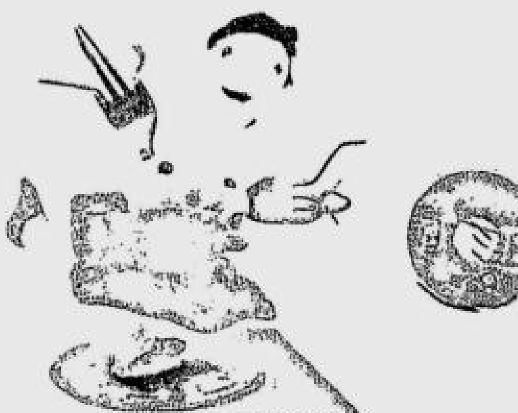
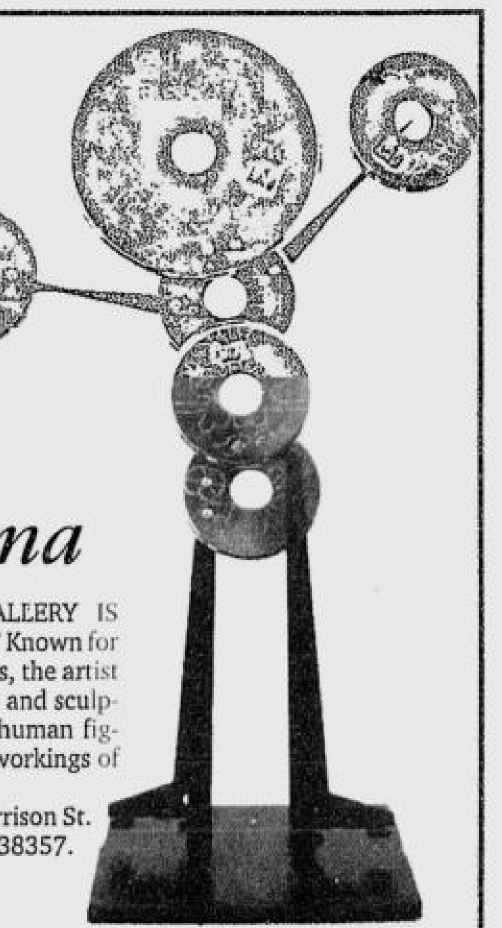
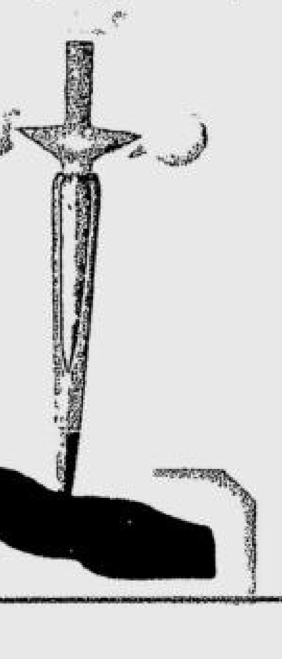


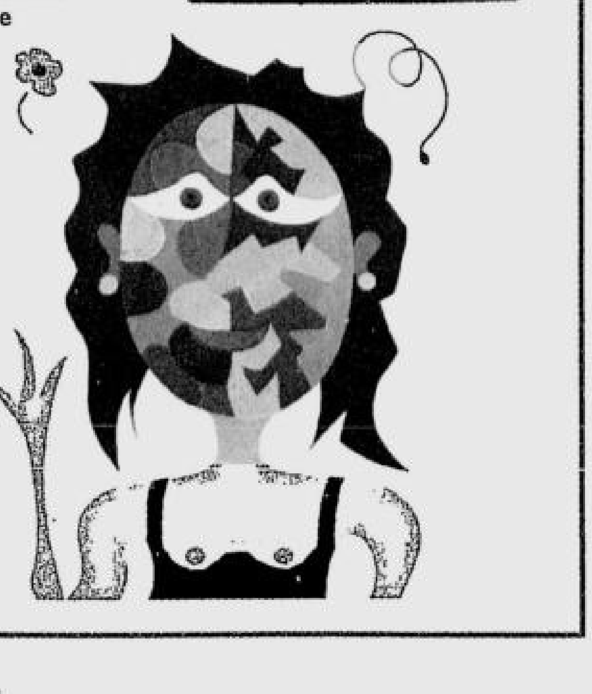


Eteve at Avellana

OPENING TODAY AT AVELLANA ART GALLERY IS Henri Eteve's "Di Meliora's Cosmovistique Art." Known for his sure-footed whimsical touch in his artworks, the artist once again casts humor and wit into paintings and sculptural pieces. Mainly composed of cartoonish human figures, the works are the result of lighthearted workings of the imagination whose metaphor is laughter.

Avellana Art Gallery is at A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St. Pasay City (fronting Gideon Academy). Call 8338357.





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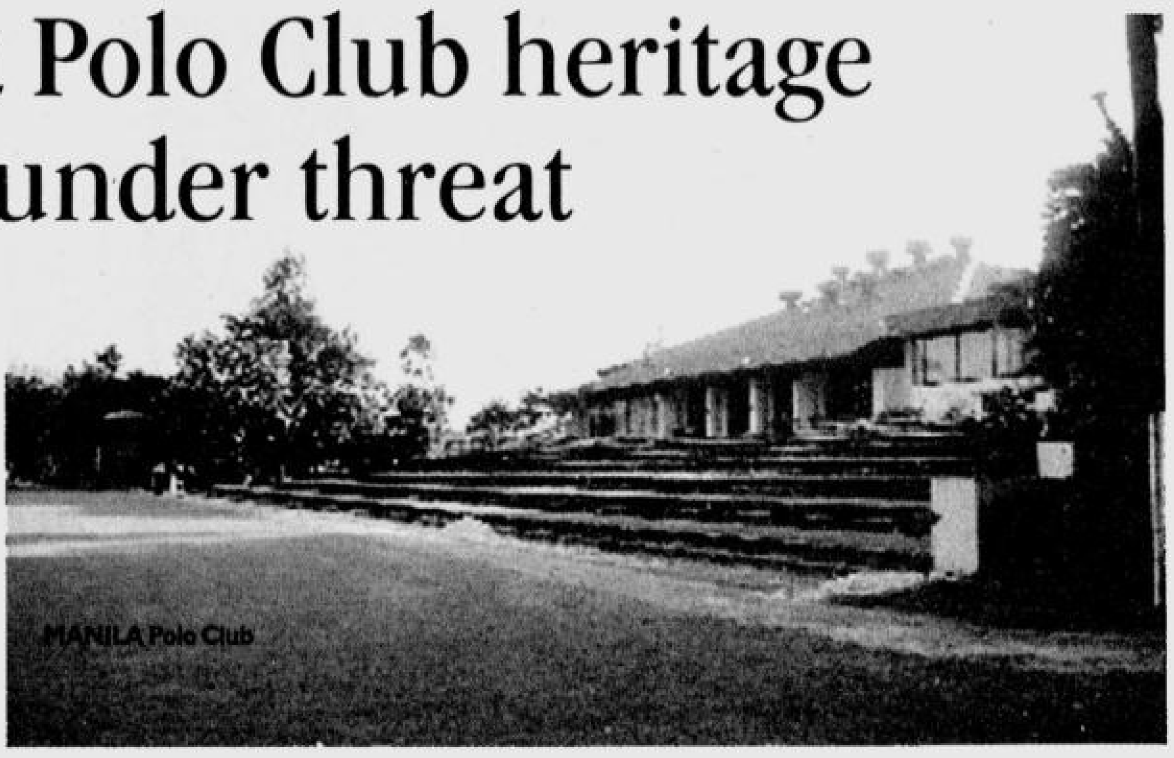
Manila Polo Club heritage under threat



PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

CLOSE TO A DEcade ago, the Manila Polo Club announced improvement plans. Recently the current board of directors unveiled a new development plan. The remodeling and improvement cycle has now come around once more.

The issues on the future of the 1949 Manila Polo Club structure are still basically the same, so I am reprinting a major part of a column written at that time, first appearing here and published a few years later in my book "Lugar" (Bookmark, Manila, 2001).

"Carefully staying out of the public eye is an intrinsic part of a private club's nature. Therefore, the Manila Polo Club, hidden away in Forbes Park, is regrettably a place that not too many people get to see. However, those who do find themselves at the Polo enjoy a distinguished piece of vintage 1950s architecture set in an incredible expanse of open space in dense Makati.

"The Manila Polo Club's main building has been around since 1949. It was designed by Pablo Antonio, the noted architect of the era whose genius was honored by the Philippine Republic that designated him a National Artist for Architecture together with Juan Nakpil and Leandro Locsin.

"Admittedly the architecture is dated but it has been so meticulously maintained that it shows no signs of tiredness. The look of the main structure has not changed much since its early days. Since my first visit there in 1959, the look has remained pretty constant to this day, establishing a wonderful feeling of continuity and constancy. These surroundings have been a second home to what now approaches four generations of members.

"Recently [about 10 years ago] the club launched an upgrading and improvement project, a necessity that all of its members will definitely approve of and appreciate..."

Tropical architecture

There is absolutely no issue with improvement. Facilities must be upgraded to keep up with the latest technology. Nor is expansion an issue. But there's an issue on maintaining the Manila Polo Club heritage while carrying out an expansion program that brings facilities up to date.

Now as then, among the main issues is the future of the unique architectural heritage of the Manila Polo Club.

A decade ago the renovation scheme envisioned to "...evoke the tradition of the grand American resorts, in particular that of the Shingle Style seaside hotels along the northeastern [New England] coast."

The appropriateness of evoking the wintry northeastern sea of Cape Cod tropical Philippines was difficult to imagine, but it was extremely clear that there was a determined plan to dismantle the traditional 1950s image that had always been associated with the club building.

The current renovation plan proposes to add a new, larger building that dwarfs the original structure. It does away with vital areas that establish club tradition for members, the lobby and the main lounge on the second floor.

The lobby may prove to be inadequate should the large additions to the premises be approved for construction. However, the present lobby establishes the homey, residential feel that the Manila Polo Club is known for and that its members value, and for that reason it should remain as it is.

The main lounge is a marvel of a space. There is nothing like it in Manila. Exposed trusses add height to its ceiling. Generous exposures open and ventilate three sides of the lounge, a masterpiece of cross-ventilated tropical architecture.

From its west terrace is a magnificent view of the Makati skyscrapers seen above the Forbes Park roofs beyond the club's elevated baseball field. On the opposite side, the east terrace, wide grassy steps are viewing stands that descend to the large polo field backdropped by a view of Fort Bonifacio skyscrap-

> The barbarians of development have set their sights at ruining another Pablo Antonio architectural masterpiece

MANILA/ D3

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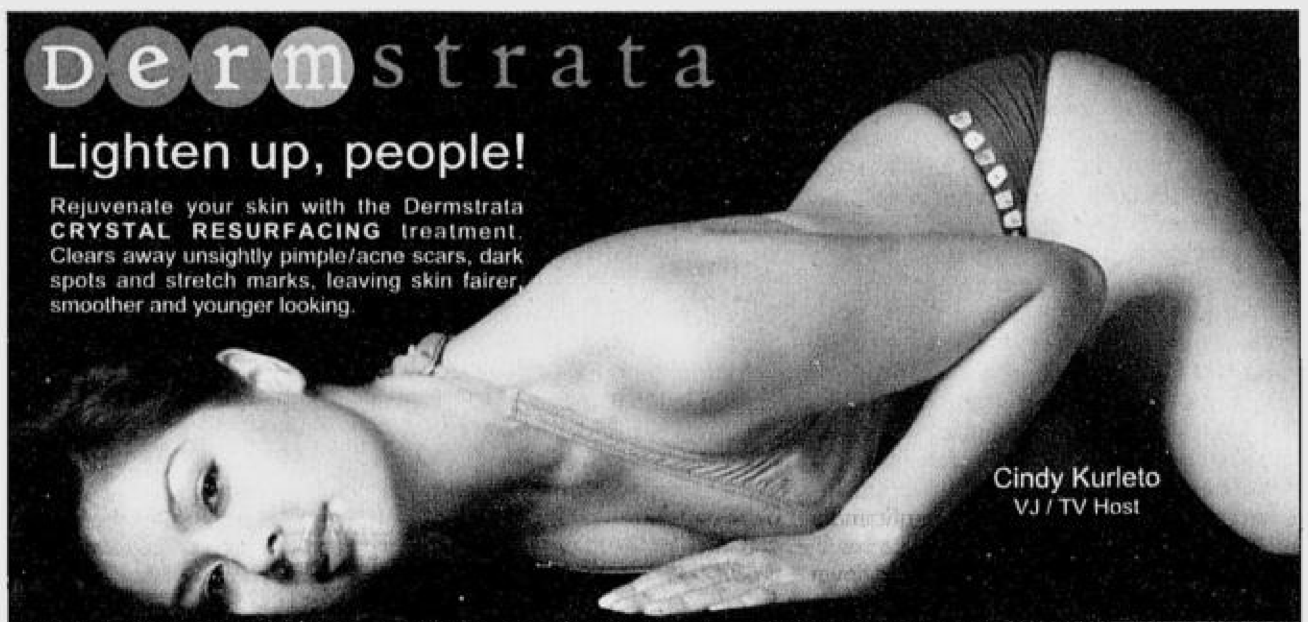

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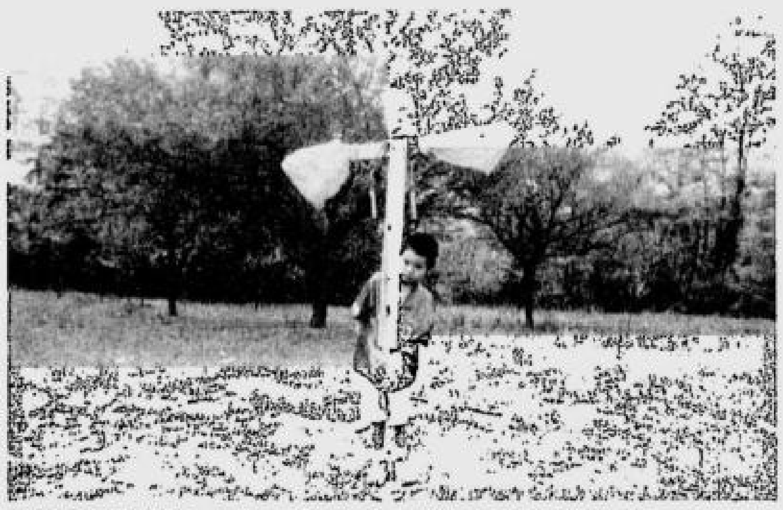
Incestuous relationship of photography and painting


"THE MYSTERY of Mary Magdalene," by At Maculangan

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE NOTION THAT PHOTOGRAPHY is a poor relation of painting in the realm of the fine arts is no longer valid. More and more the two practice symbiosis it's almost incestuous, as many painters base their works on photographs and just as many photographers try to achieve in their works a painterly look.

Three of these painterly photographers are exhibiting 10 of their works in "Seen This?" until July 23 in The Crucible Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

At Maculangan was trained as a painter in University of Santo Tomas, but his quest for "newer and less traditional forms of expression" made him abandon painting. After studying cinematography at the Mowelfund Film Institute, he went seriously into photography.

Traditional forms

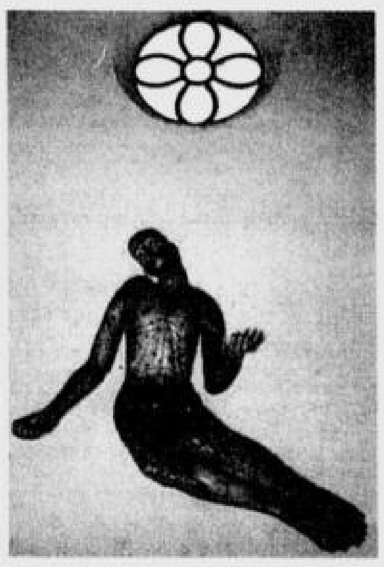
In Singapore, he exhibited his works at its art museum, and presented a project on family portraits of interracial couples and their children, specifically Filipinos married to foreigners.

In New Zealand, he exhibited a survey on artists working with alternative spaces, as well as postcard pictures of "men in uniform" such as nurses and security guards.

Having lived in Italy for 15 years, he has been trying to promote cultural exchange between Italy and the Philippines through photography. In Italy he showed Filipino life in 250 snapshots, while in Manila he exhibited 300 images of Italian life.

Maculangan says he is "particularly sensitive to the human form and spirit" in his art. But while he may think he has finally turned his back on older and more traditional forms of expression, we don't think so.

Consider "The Mystery of Mary Magdalene," one of his two photos in the exhibit. This image of a boy carrying a cultist's wooden cross on barren ground against trees and sky actually retains the characteristics of a painting.


"FLOATING God," by Escora

While it possesses the narrative bent of cinematography, it also displays the formal composition (symmetry, balance, perspective, spatial relation) and the color schematic (brown, gray, blue, green) of a traditional painting.

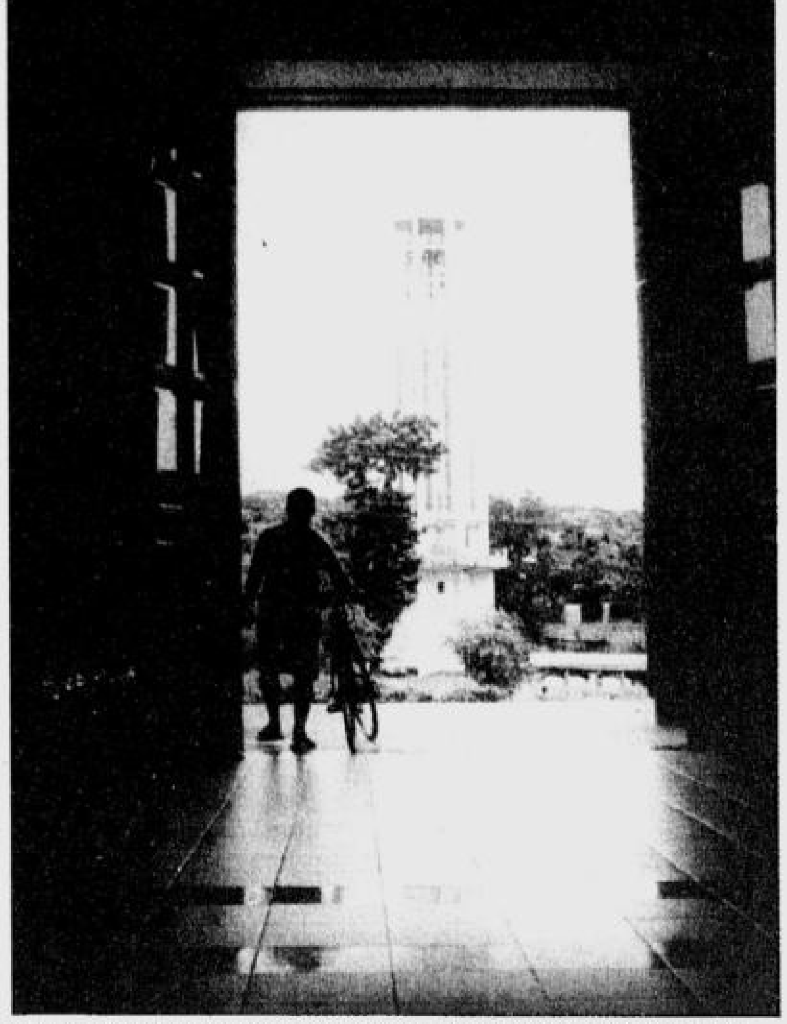
Narrative bent

It's as true as well with the photographs of Rem Zamora, the only one of the three with no formal training in art.

A graduate of Business Administration and Accountancy from University of the Philippines, Zamora was an accountant working with Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. before he ventured into photojournalism.

Now a photographer of Philippine Daily Inquirer, he won last month the Gold Prize for the General News category in the 1st Asian Photo Contest, for his picture of the Guinsaugon rescue operation showing children greeting American soldiers who are depicted only through their boots.

That photo bested 20,000 entries from over 500 photographers worldwide. The narrative bent is there, as well as the formal composition and color scheme, almost as if one were viewing a film clip.


"VIEW of the Carillon from the UP Alumni Building," by Fernando Escora

These painterly traits are almost always on display in Zamora's news photos that appear on the pages of the INQUIRER, as in this exhibit's four pieces. Witness, for example, "Sunog sa SM North," his image of a displaced woman sitting wearily against a wall among her meager belongings.

Notice the color scheme (red, fuchsia, brown, beige) and the patterns (the circle of electric fan, spheroid and oval of gas tank and plastic bag, lateral lines of the stripes of shirt and plastic bag and the radials of fan shield, rectangles of hollow blocks and TV screen).

Basic elements

Of the three photographers, Fernando Escora is the only practicing painter. A graduate of Fine Arts, major in Painting, from University of the Philippines, he has been painting for almost 10 years, with the nude human figure and lovers as favorite subjects.

Lately he was into drawing the nude while capturing the basic elements of light and shadow. This shows in his four black-and-white photos in the exhibit, which he describes as focusing on "still life, common images, landmarks and space."

Chiaroscuro and pattern-making are particularly strong in pieces such as of a man with a bicycle at the doorway of the UP Alumni Building looking out to the Carillon, and "Floating God," a twisted nude icon with a rose window high above serving as halo.

Escora believes photography is "one of the most successful mediums that can be played into to present an idea in an actual moment and time without compromising the reality of the subject." And rightly so.

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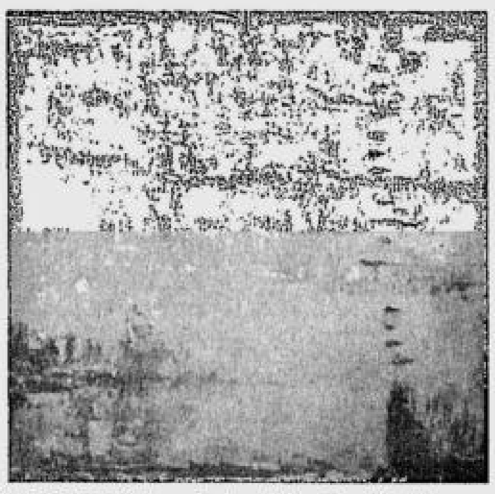
VISUAL ARTS

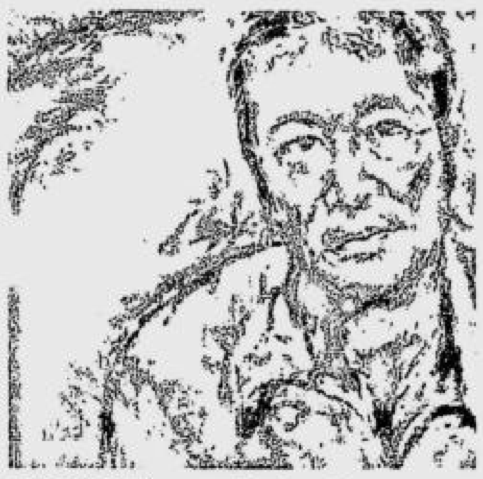
Cacnio at Ayala

Canvas, an art group promoting young artists and appreciation of the arts, presents Michael Cacnio's "Reflections on Red" at Ayala Museum. The sculptures incorporate the color red, and will be accompanied by short stories, poems and other writings. The show opens on July 21, 6 p.m. Call 0917-8906160 or visit www.canvas.ph


"FARTHER Than Below," by Camille Ver

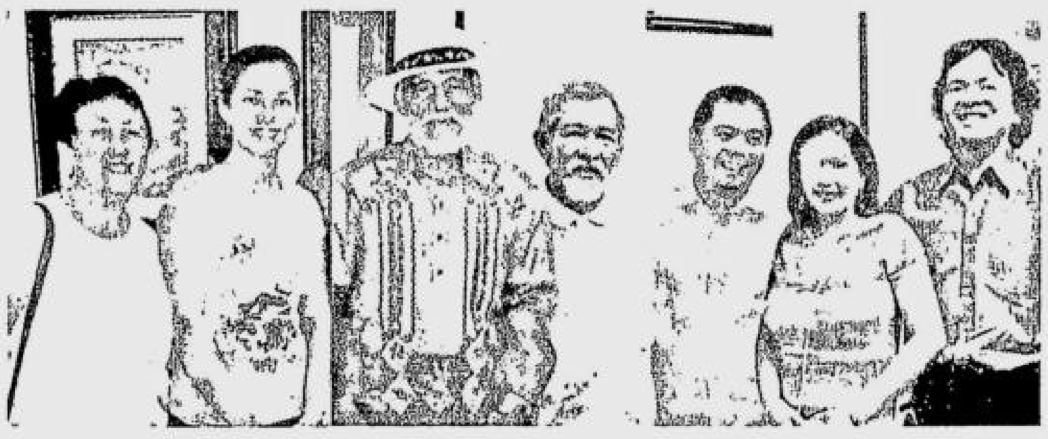
Ver at Nine

Camille Ver's "Climb," a collection of abstractions that explore varied aspects and phases of ascent and ambition, will be on display at Gallery Nine in Megamall, July 21-31. Call 6877302.


"EDWIN Wilwayco," by Joey Ibay

Ibay at Astra

Galerie Astra presents the latest works of Joey Ibay in "People I Know," a collection of portraits of friends, mainly from the art and advertising world. The exhibit features portraits of Bencab, Gus Albor, Edwin Wilwayco, Cid Reyes, Bogie Ruiz, Rico and Chachu Lascano, Ed Soler, Adele Estrada, Lydia Velasco, Don Sevilla, Migs Villanueva, Ana Labrador, Jesus Francisco and Eugene Raymundo. The exhibit runs until Aug. 3 at Galerie Astra, 2/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati. Call 8903988, 7243032 and 7269015


ARTIST Tam Austria lectured recently on "Women and Art" at Gallery Joaquin in connection with the exhibit by various artists on women subjects. With Austria (in hat) are Carina Parial, Kate Piper, Mario Parial, Jack Teotico, Josephine Gomez and Carl Perion

THE EXHIBIT on Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan (Gamaba) folk artists was recently launched at Tesoro's in Malate with President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest of honor. In photo are Samaon Sulaiman, the string virtuoso of Maguindanao, NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez and President Arroyo. Presented by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the ongoing exhibit features biographical notes and works by the 11 Manlilikha ng Bayan awardees. Call 5253936 to 40.

Tiongco at Art Space

Orlando L. Tiongco, a lawyer and retired executive who has turned to art, has just opened his one-man show at the Art for Space in the Alabang Town Center, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. "To Share a Gift of God" features Tiongco's acrylic landscapes. The artist's artmaking is influenced by the teachings of Caroline Jasper of the National Oil and Acrylic Painters' Society and Barclay Sheaks of the Virginia Wesleyan College in Norfolk. Tiongco said he has also been influenced by young Filipino artist William Barabona and art writer Manuel Dudulao.

Ifugao images at Alcove

The Alcove Photo Gallery and the Retrato Photo Library present "Faces of the Cordillera: The Bontoc and Ifugao," until July 31. The exhibit features two tribes: the Bontoc and the Ifugao—using selected images from the Retrato Photo Library's collection and text materials culled from Filipinas Heritage Library's Filipiniana collection. The Alcove Photo Gallery is at Filipinas Heritage Library along Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati. Call 8921801

Animation workshop

The Ayala Museum will conduct digital animation workshops for all persons of all ages, Aug. 4-5. Registration forms are now available. Call 7577117 to 21 local 14.

Seminar at Museo Pambata

The Museo Pambata Foundation will hold "Establishing Children's Museums," an intensive five-week seminar-workshop, Aug. 7-Sept. 8. Joining fee is P1,000 per participant. Fee is inclusive of conference kits, workshop materials and snacks. Application forms are available at the Museo Pambata office, Roxas Boulevard and South Drive, Manila. Deadline is July 21. Call 5231797 to 98, 5221246 (fax) or e-mail mads@museopambata.org.

Araos lecture at Met

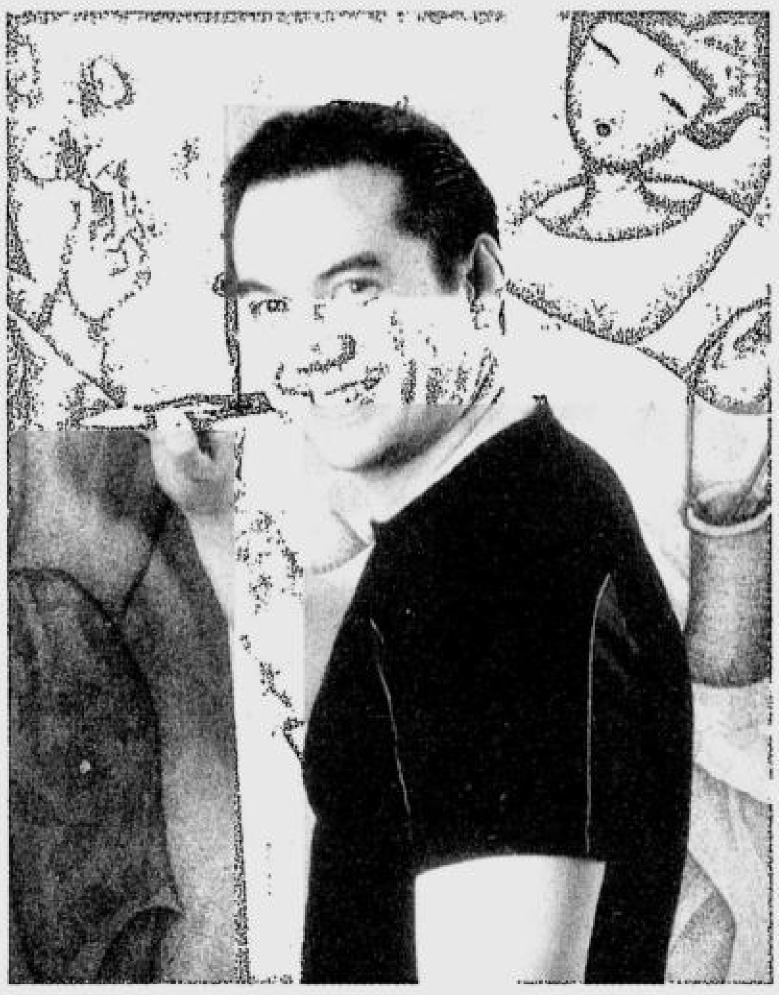
Sculptor Jerry Araos will talk about the sociocultural and design inspirations behind his works in the exhibit "Salumpuwit, atbp." at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila on July 20, 2 p.m. The exhibit is on view until July 22. Call 5271517 or 5230613

GUESTS viewing the 17 artworks on exhibit.

(RIGHT) Lawyer Pong Salud, Kazue Salud, Chit Salud and the artist

Jack Salud wows Japan

The Filipino pointillist showed his works at the Mori gallery of Roppongi Hills, with Princess Takamado cutting the ribbon



THE ARTIST at work

FILIPINO PAINTER JACK SALUD, known for his pointillism technique, was the focal point of the 108th Philippine Independence Day anniversary celebration hosted by the Philippine embassy in Tokyo.

Salud's 20th one-man exhibit, "Dotted Serenity II," was launched at the Mori Art Gallery of the Roppongi Hills complex in Tokyo. The exhibit featured 17 artworks on large-scale canvases.

Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado cut the ceremonial ribbon. She was assisted by Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon Jr. and his wife Kay.

Ambassador Siazon said this year's observance of Independence Day in Tokyo was made even more memorable as 2006 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

The golden anniversary, he said, tells the story of "a friendship unburdened by past grievances" and "a relationship that has positive effects on regional peace and prosperity."

The exhibition was held for four days attracting a over 1,500 viewers a day.

Chikage Ogi, president of the House of Councilors; Kenji Kosaka, minister for Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Dr. Kuniko Inoguchi, state minister for Gender Equality and Social Affairs; and Nobuteru Ishihara, former state minister for Administrative and Regulatory Reforms and former minister for Land, Infrastructure and Transportation, were among those who attended.

Salud was accompanied by his parents Pong and Chit, and his Japanese wife Kazue . Kazue's father Masaharu Yamada was also present.

In her congratulatory message, Princess Takamado expressed her amazement at Salud's accomplishments as an artist at his age, and conveyed "profound appreciation" of his painstaking efforts to bring 1,060 dots to every inch of his huge artworks.

AMBASSADOR Domingo L. Siazon Jr. and Madame Kay Siazon assists HIH Princess Takamado as she cuts the ceremonial ribbon at Jack Salud's art exhibit in Roppongi Hills, Tokyo.

Manila Polo...

From page C1

ers.

Visual landmarks

Both areas are the visual landmarks of the Manila Polo Club. They deserve to stay the way they are and their skyline views should not be blocked by new structures.

The practice of conservation stipulates that façades of heritage structures must not be touched. The two additional areas grafted onto the present façade will have to be relocated, but then that is an easy thing to do.

The Manila Polo Club is an architectural jewel unappreciated by many of its members. Philippine heritage experts acknowledge it as worthy of high national heritage significance.

That its architect is a National Artist certainly adds prestige to the building, and its almost mint condition further increases its heritage value.

The Manila Polo Club is of national heritage value because it is among the last surviving examples of the Pablo Antonio style of fusing Western Art Deco with tropical Philippine environment, a style that has influenced subsequent generations of architects.

It was probably the first large structure built in the early days of Makati and certainly among the first to be built in fledgling Forbes Park of the late 1940s. What increases its significance is that the building belongs to the same owners who are still using it for the original function it was designed for 57 years ago.

For many of its long-time members, the Manila Polo Club feels like their other home, a place for returning to familiar surroundings, a place as familiar as the family's ancestral home.

Some families are now on their fourth generation of using club facilities. That makes for a lot of continuity and tradition which has always set the tone for the Manila Polo Club lifestyle.

These are the intrinsic values that are lost in the 2006 development plan. It is possible that many are not aware or unable to articulate the values, but they impart a special image to Manila Polo Club.

These values are lost in the 2006 development plan.

Comments are welcome at pride.place@gmail.com

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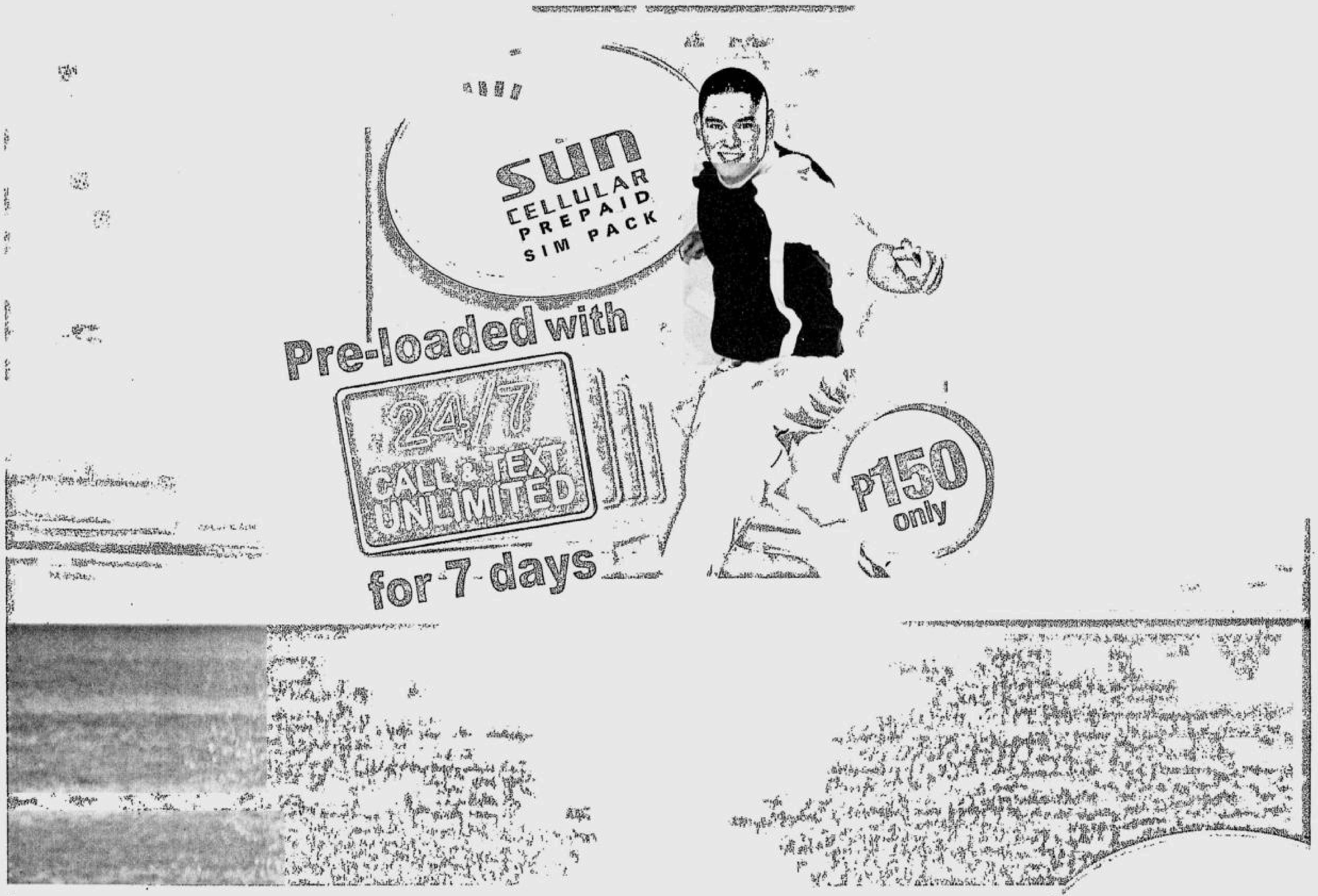
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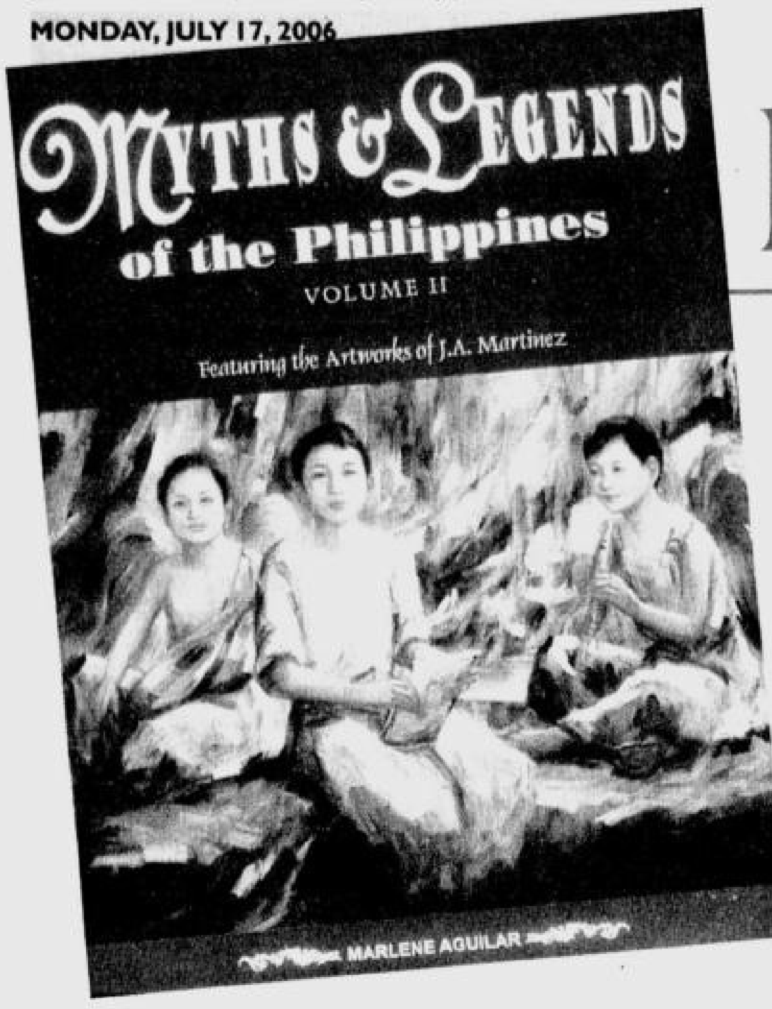

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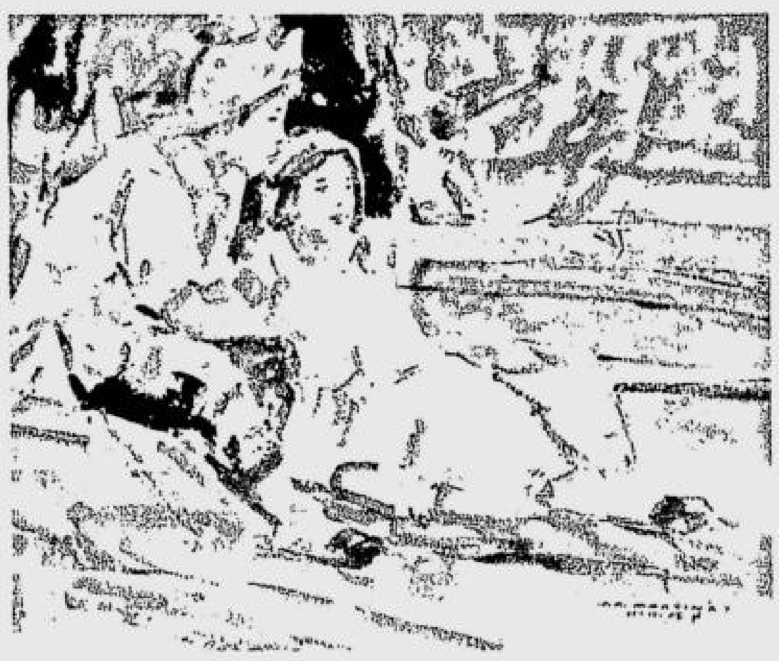
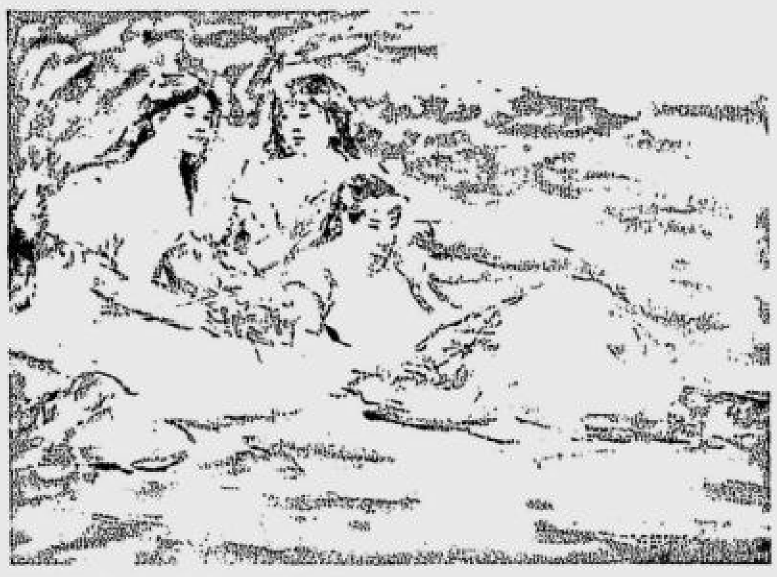


"**THE LEGEND** of Sapang Bato"



"**WHY** the Sea Cries at Night"

'Myths & Legends of the Philippines, Volume II' to be launched

PUBLISHER AND AUTHOR Marlene Aguilar wants to promote Philippine folklore through letters and the arts.

"We have thousands of folk tales covering every region, stories that originate from over 80 dialects," she said. "This is such a diversity of historical folklore. There are stories of the moon and the stars, of creation, of nature, of magnificent deeds. This rich history defines us, who we are."

Among Aguilar's favorites are the stories that describe the first Filipinos, their beliefs, their lives, the way things were before we were colonized, such as "The Legend of Creation," in which god created man and woman from the same bamboo, of equal status, without gender bias; "The Land of the Immortals," which tells of the Egyptian origins of a tribe in Mindanao; and the story of Cainta town, which is supposedly named after a wealthy and generous woman named "Ka Inta."

Aguilar wants to preserve the stories for young people like her own sons. She complained there is "not enough of Philippine art, culture and history in our education system."

As a result, Aguilar is publishing "Myths & Legends of the Philippines." The five-volume series, she said, "will contain around 150 stories and this is but a thumbnail of what exists."

In restoring the stories, Aguilar drafted artist Jun Martinez to do the colorful illustrations.

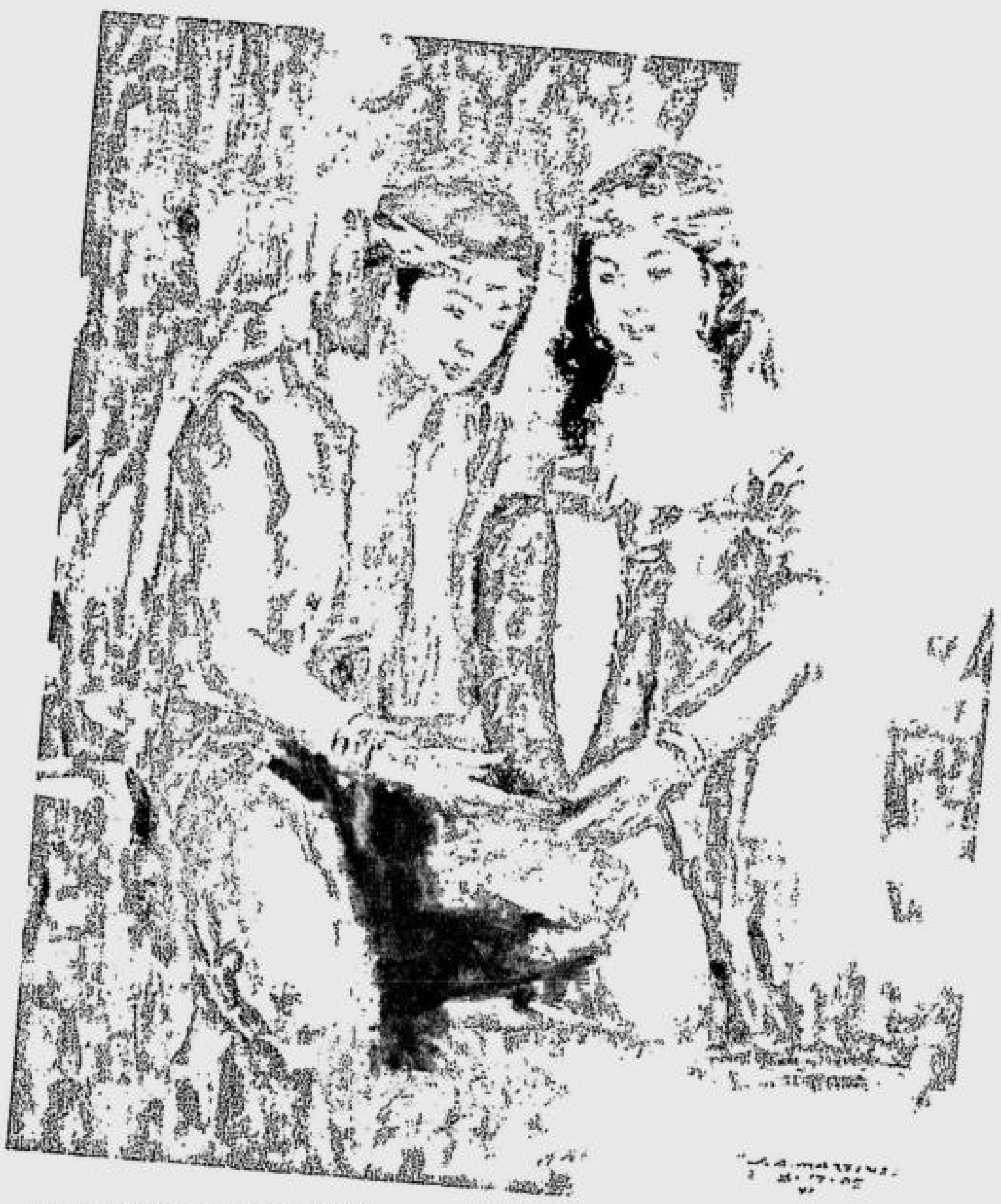
"Jun's art is dedicated to the depiction of children," Aguilar said. "Gentle faces, at peace, quiet, reserved, but sincere. His depictions tell of the sincerity of the past. His work is distinct. You can tell a Jun Martinez as soon as you enter the room. His strokes have become more confident, more dynamic, more proud, more telling."

The first volume of "Myths & Legends" sold out fast. Aguilar said a Filipino from the US wrote to tell her how the book reconnected him with home and how he had bought several copies to give to friends and relatives. She added that a boy recognized her from her mugshot in the book, and cried upon meeting her. He told her he loved the book very much.

Therefore, Aguilar is issuing the next volume in the series.

"Myths & Legends of the Philippines Volume 2" will be launched at the Metropolitan Museum on July 28, 4:30 p.m. Guests of honor will be National Artist Napoleon Abueva, journalist and author Jullie Yap-Daza, jewelry designer Laura de Guzman, Asian Development Bank director Richard Stanley, and Esther Vibal of Vibal Publishing House.

In connection with the new book, Martinez is holding the one-man show "Beyond Myths and Legends" at the Arttique Gallery on 102 Katipunan Ave., White Plains, QC, until Aug. 6. Call 0917-8250075.



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Jenny happily recalls her IPL experience: "It was about my 3rd treatment when I noticed a change. After IPL...wow, I became flawless! My pores became smaller and hardly even visible. Friends would ask, 'How did your skin get so smooth and even?' and I tell them I got IPL. The funny thing is, some of them have tried IPL with other dermatologists but didn't get results like mine. I don't know if there's a difference in the intensity they use, but my friends definitely noticed that the IPL at Facial Care Centre gave me actual, visible results."

Another fan of IPL is actress/interior design consultant Carmi Martin. She happily relates: "I used to have an uneven skin tone because of pigmentation and freckles. After IPL, my skin became even! In the past I'd always have to wear make-up because I was afraid to let people see me without it. Now, since I love going to Boracay, I can enjoy the sun and sea make-up free!"

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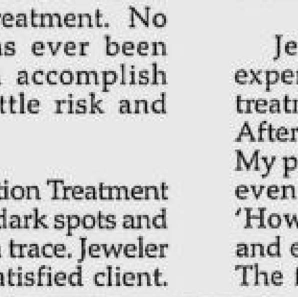
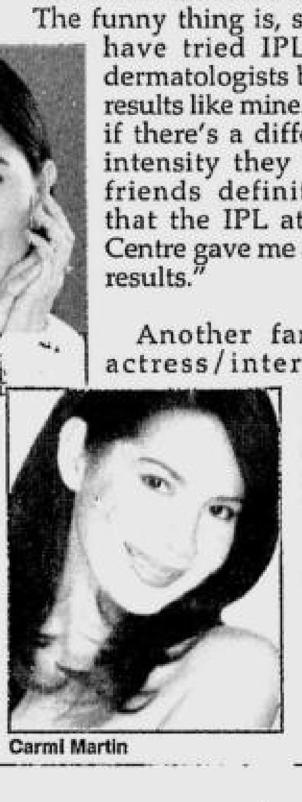
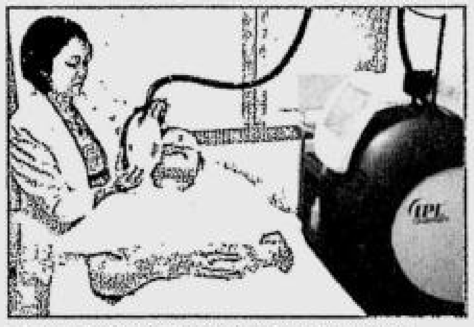


Jenny Icasas



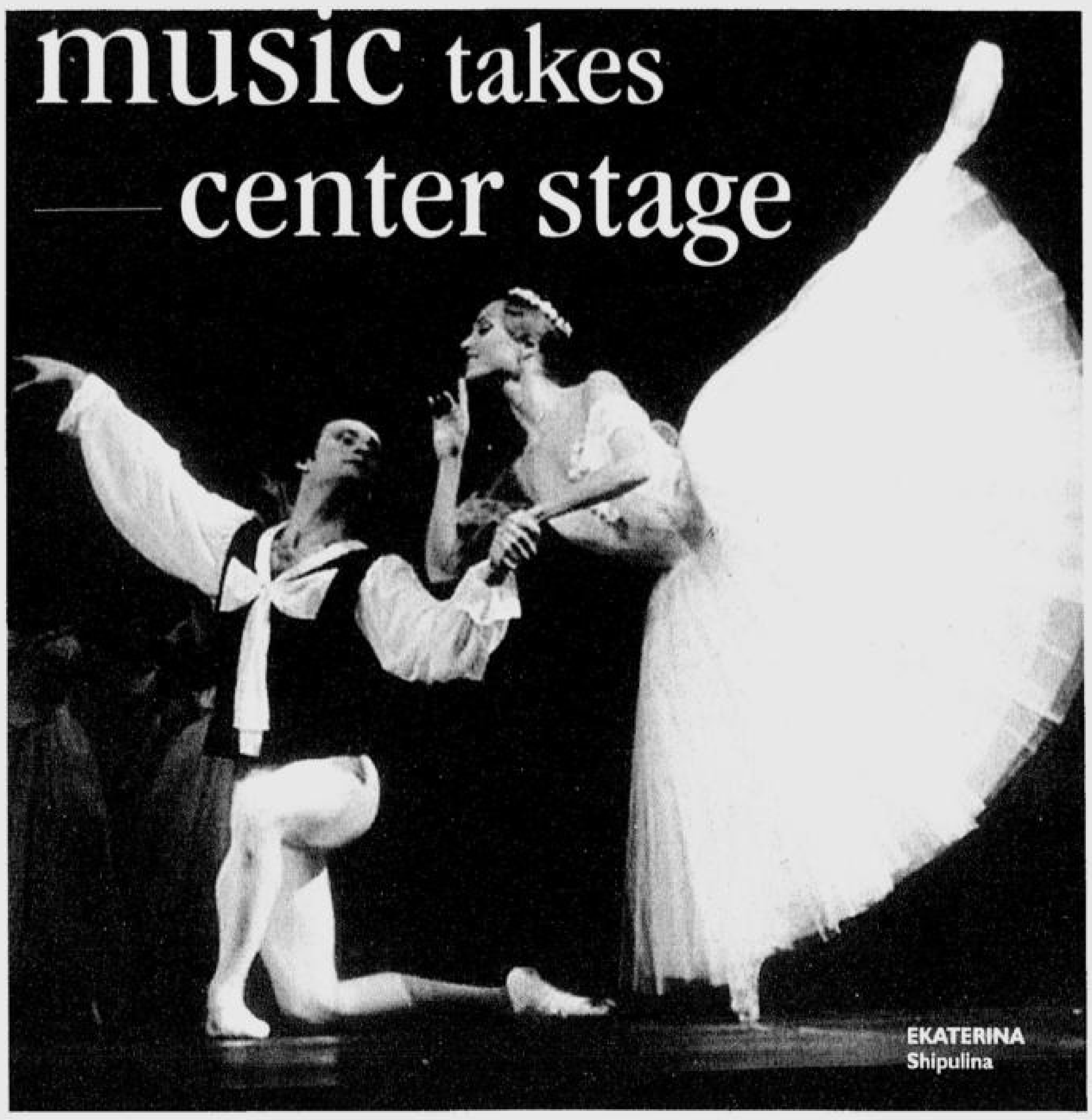
Carmi Martin



Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.

Dawn Zulueta

Russian music takes center stage



EKATERINA Shipulina

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

RUSSIAN MUSIC TOOK CENTER stage at the CCP recently as a fitting finale to the Russian Cultural Festival, held in celebration of the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations forged between Russia and the Philippines some 30 years ago.

Two young, world-class Russian artists, Felix Korobov, conductor of the Moscow State Musical Theater, and pianist Denis Matsuev, Tchaikovsky competition grand prize winner, awed the audience with the powerful tandem they forged in rendering two popular Russian concerti: Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Op. 23; and Rachmaninov's Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op.18.

Partaking in the celebration was the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra (SMPO), which fully came up to measure, sounding very much like a world-class orchestra. Donning in their gala attire, the members played with soulful inspiration.

Completing the all-Russian program was Michael Glinka's Overture to "Russlan and Ludmilla."

In the overture, which opened the program, Korobov at once established authority, displaying ease as he zealously wielded the baton over the quickly responding musicians of the SMPO. The rendition was thorough, shining with well-etched nuances that moved the audience to thunderous applause, spiced with shouts of bravos at the end.

PIANIST Denis Matsuev

And to think that there was only one rehearsal with the conductor and the pianist, done on the day before the concerto performance, according to my seatmate Susan Macuja.

Matsuev also played on the same evening of the said concerto rehearsal, as he electrified the audience with his dazzling performance of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, which resulted in the long queue at the box office for purchase of tickets to the next day's concert.

When he entered the hall, Matsuev at once got attention with his magnetic presence. Tall and statuesque, he sported a warm look. His resemblance to American pianist Van Cliburn, could not simply remain unnoticed.

It must be recalled that Cliburn's winning concerto that made him the first American to bag the grand prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition was the same Tchaikovsky opus Matsuev played.. Manila heard Cliburn in his celebrated performance of the said work both at the CCP and the Araneta Coliseum in 1973.

On the piano, he was composed and cool and did not show particular choreographic movements, except when the passages called for them. Stunning was Matsuev's rendition. Truly a virtuoso of the first order, he refused to play with only raw technical prowess, but fused it with sublime emotional warmth.

Neither did he allow powerful tones to solely dominate the soundscape he sensitively etched. Finesse wrapped them to provide the soul an essence that all the more enthralled the audience to savor the biting romance both Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov breathed into their works.

There was no rushing of passages, especially the runs. Instead, Matsuev made them sing in clear, luminous lines.

Debonair

Both works contain lyrical as well as debonair thematic materials that tug the heart. The climaxes are brilliant; they spell contagious warmth of feeling. And yet Matsuev dared not overstate. Integrity towered over melodrama.

Though his dynamics were clearly contrasted, clear shades or gradations of difference were distinctly etched, thus avoiding a run-of-the-mill "black and white" rendition—indeed, an immature style that only starkly contrasts soft and loud passages, fast and slow tempi and the like.

Matsuev played both concerti with convincing solid dispatch. His technical virtuosity towered in the parallel octaves, which he rendered with Lisztian fire.

The cadenza was particularly absorbing. Here, all the more the listeners were ravished by his sterling tone: singing, fully muscled and not hammered out, deep and resonating.

In the Rachmaninov concerto, the opening notes were struck with smooth suavity. Matsuev kept his dialogue with the orchestra in the second movement with utmost urbanity, a refinement that was both soulful and refreshing.

Rapport was tight between him and the conductor. Korobov never wavered. The orchestra played to the full with secure enthusiasm.

The layout was commendable: the brasses obliquely placed at the right corner and the double basses behind the violins resulted in a well-blended symphonic tone. The ensemble work was perfect, and one would think it was achieved through several rehearsals.

"Only in a single rehearsal," reiterated Susan Macuja.

Indeed, the SMPO musicians should be commended. Macuja further added that Matsuev and Korobov always play together as a tandem. Matsuev always engages Korobov in a concerto performance.

The ovation that followed at the end was simply deafening, shouts of bravos interspersing with thunderous applause. Matsuev encored a transcription (perhaps by Liszt) of the Rossini aria "Largo al factotum" to the delight of the audience.

A group of well wishers led by the Russian ambassador's wife Valentina Nebogatova and including former First Lady Imelda Marcos ascended the stage and sang "Happy Birthday" to the pianist, who was showered with Filipiniana gifts.

The San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra fully came up to measure under Felix Korobov's baton, sounding very much like a world-class orchestra

BOLSHOI soloist Alexander Volchkov

'Florante at Laura' opens Gantimpala's 29th season

GANTIMPALA THEATER FOUNDATION (GTF), together with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), opens its 29th season with the *komedya* version of Francisco Balagtas' "Florante at Laura."

"This 'Florante at Laura' production uses the Filipino theater form of the *komedya*, with its stylized entrances, marches, *batalla* and *pingkian*, and the conflict and triumphs that befall the warring kingdoms of Christians and Moors. We firmly believe that it should be staged as such for it was the prevailing theater form during Balagtas' time," GTF artistic director Tony S. Espejo said.

Espejo also pointed out another reason this production is special: "We bring to fore two great men of Philippine arts and culture as the famous Filipino love story now uses the literary version of National Artist for Literature Virgilio Almario, and we incorporate the movements of the *komedya* from San Dionisio of Parañaque, Nabuan, Isabela and Batanes as researched and documented by our newly proclaimed National Artist for Dance, Ramon Obusan."

The show features Marcus Madrigal (Florante); Nelia Aguado (Laura); Wowie de Guzman (Adolfo); Yutaka Yamakawa (Menandro); Christopher David (Aladin), Angeli Bayani (Flerida), Bong Embile (Haring Linceo); Jorge Cabullo (Duke Briseo); Melinda Peña (Reyna Floresca); and Michael King Urieta (Narrator/Batang Florante).

Roobak Valle directs. Lights design by Andy Villareal. Set design by Norman Peñaflorida. Stage manager is Burx Daite. Production manager is Charyl Chan. Makeup by Ever-Bilena/Color Care.

"Florante at Laura" performances are slated July 23 (6 p.m., Concert at the Park Open-Air Auditorium, Manila); July 28-30 and Aug. 5-6 (10 a.m./2 p.m., AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City); Aug. 11-13 (10 a.m./2 p.m.) SM Southmall, Las Piñas City) and Aug. 19 (Expo Filipino, Clark, Pampanga).

For tickets, sponsorship, queries for outreach tours and other information, call 8995745/8963503.

MARCUS Madrigal (Florante), Nelia Aguado (Laura) and Wowie de Guzman (Adolfo) in Gantimpala Theater's "Florante at Laura"

Spotlight on 13-year-old pianist

THE MANILA CHAMBER Orchestra (MCO) Foundation and Equitable PCI Bank present the "MCO Young Artists Recital Series," featuring young pianist Noreen Paula Tan Ngo at Equitable PCI Bank's Francisco Santiago Hall, on July 30, 3 p.m.

The recital repertoire will include Scarlatti's Sonatas No. 23 in E and No. 14 in D; Beethoven's Sonata No. 3 in C, Op. 2 No.3; Chopin's Etudes in E, Op. 10 No.3 and in C Op. 10 No. 1; Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13, and F. de Leon's "Sayaw ng Igorot."

Noreen Ngo was introduced to the piano instrument at an early age since her mother is also a piano teacher and an alumna of the University Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music. She started her formal piano lessons at age 5 under the tutelage of Aida Sanz-Gonzalez. She is a Namcya winner in both categories Piano Solo A1 (2001) and A2 (2004); and in Miriam College Center for Applied Music's MMCO Competition for Young Artist Piano Concerto Cat. A (2005). She was accepted in the UST Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Dean Raul Sunico.

Noreen is 13 years old and a student of Chang Kai Shek College, where she has garnered academic honors in both English and Chinese instruction.

The "MCO Young Artists Recital Series" is one of the programs of the MCO Foundation, which is geared toward supporting young and highly talented artists by giving them performance opportunities for them to gain the experience, exposure and endorsement.

Admission is free. Seats are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Call 8784359 or 8407000 local 2258.

Hiyas Hila in homecoming concert

PIANIST HIYAS A. HILA IS featured in in a solo recital at the Philamlife Theatre on Aug. 11, 8 p.m. The recital is earmarked for the scholarship program of the UP Alpha Sigma Fraternity Alumni Association.

The first part of the program consists of Beethoven's 32 Variations in C Minor; the second movement; Stephen Paulus' Preludes: II. Mysterious, IV. Serene, and Debussy's Images, Book I (1905).

The second part, an all-Mozart program in observance of the great composer's 250th birth anniversary, opens with Mozart's Overture to Die Zauberflote to be rendered by the Manila Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Prof. Arturo T. Molina. Mozart's Concerto in A Major, K 488, for piano and orchestra, with Hiyas as soloist, concludes the program.

Hiyas is a sophomore in the Doctor of Musical Arts degree program at the School of Music of the University of Minnesota under the tutelage of Leeds and Leventritt winner, Prof. Lydia Artymiw. She was a winner in the university's concerto competitions last December where she played the above-mentioned Mozart concerto as her contest piece.

HIYAS Hila

She bagged the first prize in the Graduate Division of the 83rd Annual Scholarship Competition of the Schubert Club of Minnesota and second prize of the Elinor Bell Piano Competition both held in Minnesota last April and February this year, respectively.

A John Quimson Fellow of the Asian Cultural Council, Hiyas Hila is the recipient of the Centennial Piano Fellowship (2005), awarded by the School of Music to an incoming student who excels in the live audition for admission. She is also a teaching assistant at the School of Music and College of Liberal Arts.

Hiyas earned both her Bachelor of Music (2003) and Master of Music (2005) degrees, major in piano performance, from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in California, where she was a student of Mack McCray.

She was a recipient of the Sergei Barsukov Scholarship in piano and the GlaxoSmithKline for the entire duration of her study at the conservatory. She was a consistent dean's lister, and had received departmental awards on the undergraduate level in Eastern Philosophy and Harmony.

Sponsors of the concert include GlaxoSmithKline, Toyota Motor Philippines and Philamlife Insurance Company.

Tickets are available at the Alpha Sigma Fraternity Fund-Drive Secretariat, tel. 4365641; Philamlife PR office, 5216300 local 11250 and 5269250; MCO Foundation, 8783459; St. Scholastica's School of Music, 5247686 local 288, and at the hall before concert time.

DAVID Sedaris

Humorist David Sedaris coming to Manila

naked
david sedaris

DAVID SEDARIS HAS BEEN called "the most brilliantly witty New Yorker since Dorothy Parker" by the New York Magazine; as "positively tonic" by Booklist; and "one of America's most prickly, and most delicious young comic talents" by The Washington Post.

After his breakout debut recounting his altogether strange but humorous experiences as a Macy's green tights-clad elf, Sedaris has given speaking engagements, which have been consistently standing-room-only affairs. His sardonic wit has earned him a place among America's preeminent humorists.

The master of satire behind the bestsellers "Barrel Fever," "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim" and "Holidays on Ice," as well as personal essay collections "Naked" and "Me Talk Pretty One Day," is set to talk up a storm here in the Philippines.

PowerBooks Specialty Store honors David Sedaris as its Author of the Month and treats Filipino readers to the popular writer's book signing and reading engagement this July.

Everyone is invited to the three-day event on July 27, 6 p.m., at PowerBooks' Shangri-La Plaza branch, on July 28, 5 p.m., at the Alabang outlet and on July 29, 5 p.m. at PowerBooks Greenbelt. The signing's first two days include a 15-minute reading while the final day includes a one-hour reading session.

For those who already have copies of Sedaris' books, no purchase or signing pass is required if you intend to have only one book signed by the author. For others who wish to have more than one book signed, you may purchase any book by Sedaris from July 1-29 at any PowerBooks branch.

A book purchase gives an individual one signing pass, which will allow him to have three books signed. The signing pass can be used at any of the scheduled dates. Each pass is valid for one-time use only. Present your official receipts at the Customer Service Counter of the branch where the purchase was made to obtain your pass.

To better facilitate the signing, PowerBooks will also be issuing numbered stubs that will be given out on a first-come, first-serve basis on the day of the signing. Customers should present their signing pass at the registration booth (which opens three hours before the event) to get a numbered stub. Those who intend to have only one book signed are also required to register and obtain a numbered stub at the registration booth.

PowerBooks Specialty Store is a complete one-stop bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (tel. 7576428 to 29), SM Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25), Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334, 5243448), and Mall of Asia (5560244).

'Purpose-Driven Life' author visits Manila

THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines, in partnership with Purpose-Driven South Asia, is bringing to Manila Dr. Rick Warren, the internationally acclaimed author of the best-selling book, "Purpose-Driven Life," and his wife, author-teacher Kay Warren, for an exclusive two-day fora hosted by MAP.

Ms Warren will talk about "Supporting A Spouse of Influence," to be held on July 26, 12 nn, in the Grand Ballroom of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila. Dr. Warren will be the guest at the CEO Dinner Forum with the theme, "Stewardship of Influence and Affluence," on July 25, 6 p.m., at the Rizal Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La.

The couple's visit will be highlighted by a two-day conference for the general public, from July 25-26, at the Araneta Coliseum, with the theme: "Build a Purpose-Driven Nation, Live Purpose-Driven Lives."

DR. Rick Warren

Kay Warren is co-founder of Saddleback Church and Acts of Mercy. She has authored many inspirational books under the "Encouragement for Pastors' Wives" series. She visited the Philippines in October 2004 to spend time ministering to leprosy patients at Tala Leprosarium as part of her church's global PEACE mission.

Dr. Warren's "Purpose-Driven Life," meanwhile, has sold over 28 million copies worldwide.

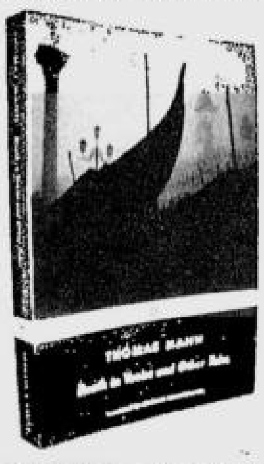
MAP is encouraging its members to get sponsorship for these fora. Proceeds from the lunch and dinner meeting will go toward the purchase of books, CDs, DVDs, manuals, to further the Purpose-Driven Ministry in the Philippines. An initial portion of the proceeds will also be used to provide materials to the public attending the conference at the Araneta Coliseum who cannot afford to purchase them.

Please register early and take advantage of the early-bird rates. Depending upon the level of sponsorship, ranging from patron, donor, bronze, silver, gold to platinum, a member can avail of lunch or dinner with book plus a half-day session on Purpose-Driven Life to be facilitated by Purpose-Driven Philippines.

Call 7511147 to 52 or e-mail mapsec@globenet.com.ph.

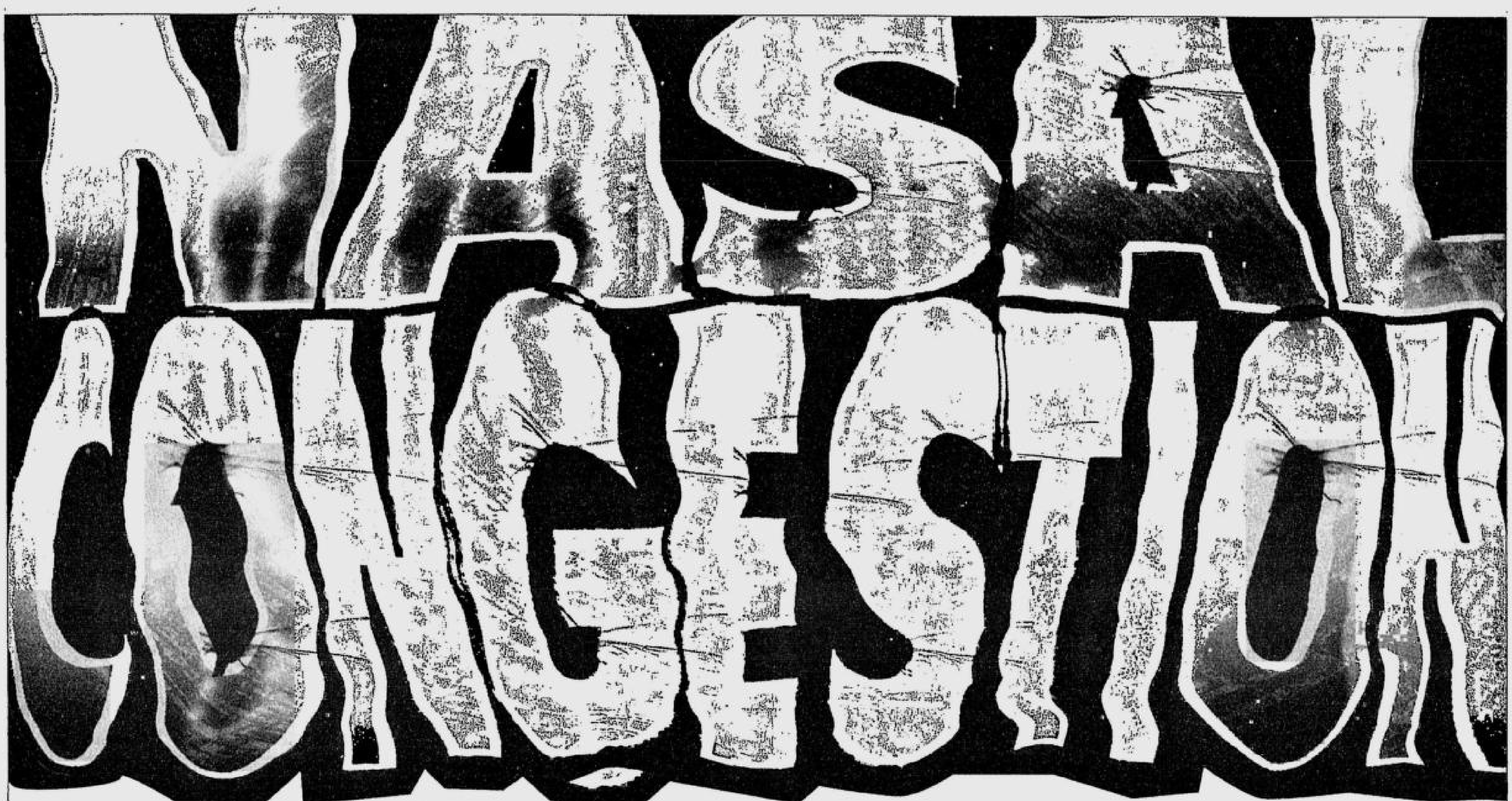
Mann's masterpiece

A SAD AND EROTIC TALE OF A ruinous quest for love, "Death in Venice," PowerBooks' Award Winner Feature for July, follows aged novelist Gustav von Aschenbach as he travels to Venice where he sees and becomes obsessed with the stunning yet unattainable beauty of Tadzio, a young Polish boy.



The controversial novella is by Nobel Prize laureate Thomas Mann. Born in Germany, Mann studied in a prestigious university and later marrying the daughter of a prominent Jewish family of intellectuals. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929 for his novel, "Buddenbrooks."

PowerBooks has branches at Greenbelt 4 (tel. 7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334, 5243448).



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Auteurs as terrorists in a McMovie age

By Ed Lejano
Contributor

THE VIBRANCY OF ASIAN cinema got a big boost as the film competition winners were announced at the recently concluded Singapore International Film Festival.

The roster of winners for the festival's Silver Screen Awards was a telling measure of the region's vitality as well as a current barometer of world cinema's offerings in the midst of harsh realities.

In this era where the typical "mcMovie" flexes its Hollywood weight in the global box-office, the equation of moviemaking has made it harder and harder for "art films" to get commercial exhibition beyond the limited festival circuit and into the high-stakes commercial market. For most of these non-mainstream films, their chances for commercial release are getting slimmer, and they usually end up going straight to video or relegated to a "Poseidon" fate.

The reality of the generic blockbuster film fare for the world market is a bitter bill for cinephiles in search of signs of intelligent life beyond the summer-movie formula, or clone. Then comes the next movie franchise and a vicious Sisyphian cycle ensues.

But the genius of the system, to borrow André Bazin's phrase, amidst this heavily standardized, technologically dependent cultural juggernaut, can still foster a small window of opportunity for true-blue film artists.

Individual visions

Works borne out of creative freedom and individual visions are what distributors normally avoid and what film festivals champion—films that hardly see the glint of worldwide distribution. Festivals being what they are, viewers momentarily forgo mindless blockbusters, predictable Hollywood sequels or spin-offs and action flicks of the fast and furious kind.

> At the Singapore International Film Festival, the breadth and depth of Asian cinema—sublime, esoteric—was on full display

Events like the SIFF are where the sublime, the obscure and the esoteric manage to keep afloat, swim or, at times, soar in an annual celebration of cinematic works. With its track record of giving recognition to the next important Asian filmmaker, this year's edition was no exception as its film competition awardees attested to.

Japanese helmsman Ryuchi Hiroki scored a triumph for "Its Only Talk," bagging best picture and repeating the critical success of his "Vibrator Girl" from 2003. He utilized the same talented actress in this tragi-comic drama about a thirty-something manic depressive and the four dysfunctional men in her life.

By situating it in a "tasteless downtown," its Japanese locale became a perfect fit for its aimless characters in this heartfelt story of being alive amidst all the gloom.

"Gie," a gloriously produced biopic on a political activist living dangerously during the 1960s Indonesia, was awarded the jury prize. Riri Raza's sweeping portrait of the Chinese-Indonesian Soe Hok-Gie showed an uncompromising idealist during a turbulent time in the country's history, unafraid to rant against the dawning of ex-President Suharto's regime.

The 147-minute film devoted ample screentime to its subject yet kept a safe distance for an altogether ambiguous effect, perhaps being true to the nature of the real-life Gie.

Two first-time filmmakers, representing two distinctive filmmaking practices, were awarded the Netpac/Fipresci special prize, true to the award's thrust for recognizing new names.

"Taking Father Home" by Ling Yiong presented a rare glimpse of the other China. Postcard-pretty images were eschewed for scenes of rural life far removed from the Chinese-sanctioned visions of flying daggers and costume spectacles. In its use of nonprofessional actors and minimalist *mise-en-scene*, the film achieved a hard-hitting realism, especially in its bloody conclusion.

The adolescent protagonist's criminal act near the end came as a shock, and could be read as a figurative slaying of patriarchy from the Chinese underbelly point of view.

John Torres' triumph

From a symbolic message of crime to that of artist as terrorist is the premise of Filipino filmmaker John Torres' work, which tied with the abovementioned film.

"Todo Todo Teros," channeled the spirit of late '60s Jean Luc-Godard combined with a post-9/11 angst in this experimental no-frills work. Its use of found and organized footage, sutured with a narrative that was added during the editing stage, resulted in a meandering, shape-shifting flow.

The film opened with an intriguing set-up—a voiceover narrating how he woke up as a terrorist and then drifted on to a journey that was both physical and otherwise.

In the no-budget works of newbie directors, Torres and Ling Yiong, were visions from emerging auteurs that bear watching in the age of the multimillion blockbuster movie.

The SIFF played host to a number of international premieres, like two other Silver Screen awardees, Kelvin Tong's "Love Story" and "Pepot Artista" by Clodualdo del Mundo Jr.

The fully packed screening of the former, a Hongkong/Singapore co-production partially financed by Andy Lau's Focus First Cuts, unspooled to a rapt audience, who gamely played along with its puzzle of a narrative in a film that clinched the best director award for the Singaporean filmmaker.

"Love Story" is composed of disparate stories connected by the strand of desire in finding true love, done in a moody art-film style. Worthy of attention were its sleek production values that, at times, underscored the material's unclear context, an offshoot perhaps of its cultural-hybrid nature.

"Pepot Artista" won the best actor award for Elijah Castillo, a child actor in his first film role. Set in the '70s, the Filipino film centered on a dreamy-eyed boy who wanted to be a movie star. Its use of rare film clips of singing teen idols of the era paid loving tribute to Philippine movies and stars of the period. Castillo's best actor win certainly lent an ironic spin to the feel-good narrative that might actually help the child star's reel-to-real stardom.

The Lebanese film, "Kiss Me Not on the Eyes," the festival's opening film, had best actress winner Hanane Turk sensitively portraying the lead character Dunia. She played a student of poetry and belly dancing in this well-textured drama set amidst Egypt's pulsating environs and filtered through a distinctly feminized gaze. The film cleverly balanced what could be another empowerment yarn with a sensitive depiction of female sensuality.

The other films like "Men At Work" from Iran, India's "After the Night…Dawn," "Under the Ceiling" from Syria, and "A Short Film About Indio Nacional," rounded up the program, with the latter being the Philippines' third entry in the SIFF competition.

The festival's closing film was Royston Tan's critically acclaimed "4:30," following its Berlin world premiere. An existential tale of alienation and longing for connection, its disquieting stillness made for a well-nuanced variation of the HDB experience, a recurring milieu in recent Singaporean films.

Current pulse

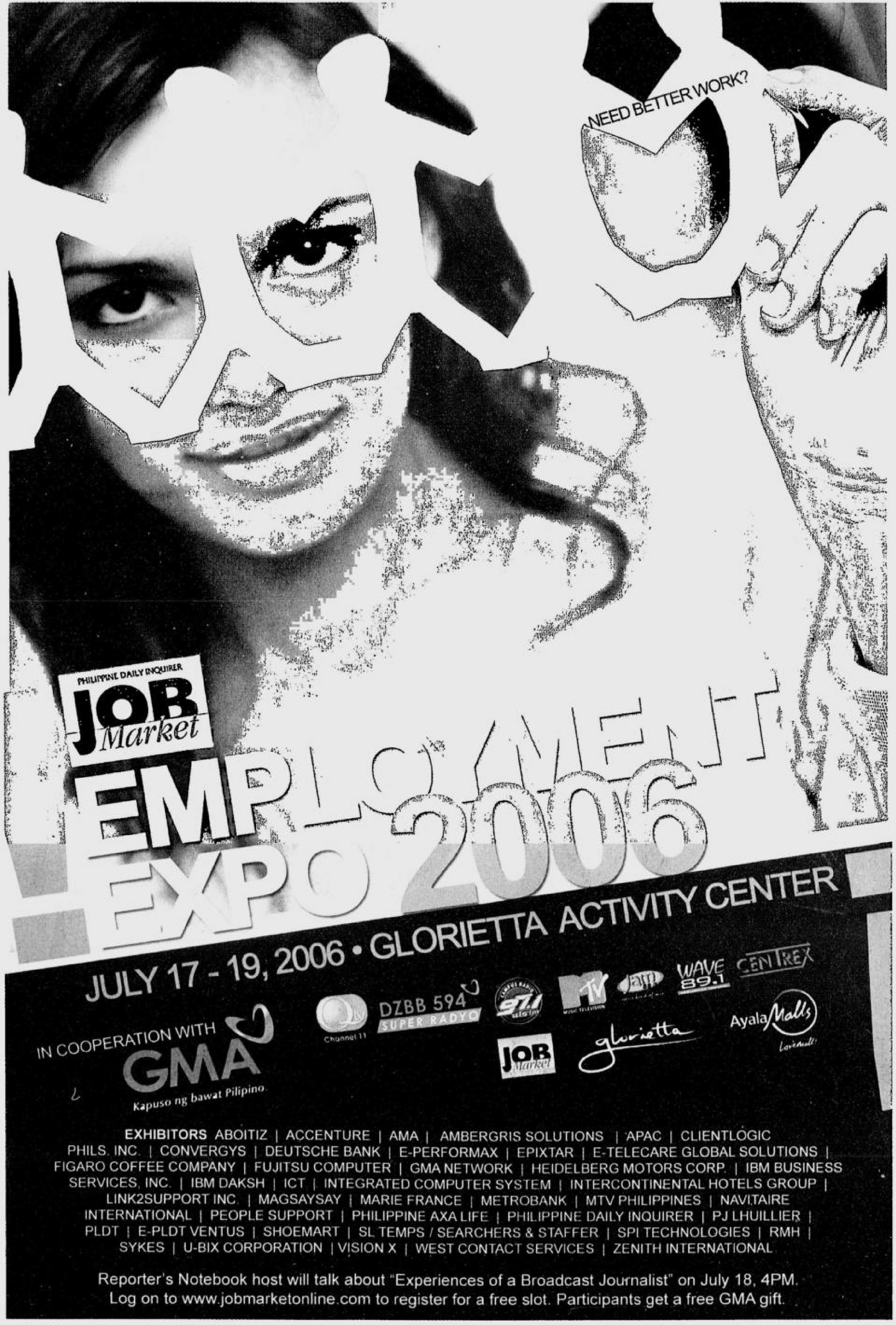
Despite budgetary cuts, the SIFF proceeded merrily along with a bewildering program of 300 features and shorts from over 40 countries. It took herculean effort to keep pace with all the films, many of the them screening only once. But better an embarrassment of riches than a tired program of the same-old and the safe, the latter being the greater form of terrorism.

A local animation that screened at its short film competition, "Where Is Singapore" did put a cutesy spin on the paradox of trying to find the tiny country on the map despite being a top Asian destination.

In a year with notable weak Asian presence in festivals like Cannes, the offerings in this year's SIFF celebrated anew the works of established and emerging auteurs from the region and beyond.

As the Asian filmmaker dwells on the point of movie-making these days—whether to provide mass entertainment or to strive to make a difference against all the odds—the festival experience was and still is a potent space to remind us of film's loftier pleasures.

E-mail the author at edlej@yahoo.com



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Reporter's Notebook host will talk about "Experiences of a Broadcast Journalist" on July 18, 4PM.
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